

A black and white close-up portrait of Howard Stern with his signature wild, curly hair. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight, enigmatic smile. The image serves as the background for the magazine cover.

Esquire

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

MAY 1997 \$2.50

Shocking but True!

HOWARD STERN

BLITZES AMERICA

By Barbara Kruger

I

hate

myself

and you love me for it





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does
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like
Dockers



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COOL WATER



MAN AT HIS BEST

Portrait of
Geronimo
by Gertrude
Kaiser, whose
photographs
are on exhibit
at the Museum
of Modern Art.
Page 43



What's Happening

28

Made: *Turkey*, *Tatler*, *For* *Clips* *Nomad* *Mix*, self-destructive *Gertrude*, *Kaiser*'s *Native American* photos, and more.

Off the Charts

37

A *WORLD* *OUT* *OF* *TIME*: Henry *Kaiser* and David *Leahy* have been pilloried for their music of *Madagascar*. By *KATE* *LEWIS*

Eat and Run

39

THE *SIZE* *OF* *THE* *KID*—*CARLE*: A few *leaves* *chill* on *looking* *Don* *Born* *New* *Orleans*'s *culinary* *climate*. By *JOHN* *MARTIN*

Design

40

From the *set* *of* *the* '90s is sharp and *Madeline*, re-
flecting *across* at the *coming* *millennium*. By *PAUL* *PARTON*

House Hunting

46

ARE *ON* *THE* *TRAIL*: The new wave of *modernist* *architecture* *has* *turned* *Venice* *into* *the* *New* *Great* *Place*. By *PAUL* *SCHWEDER*

FASHION

Perfect Combinations

106

FOUR *FILM* *COUTURES*—*Tammy* *Daly* and *Penelope* *Ann* *Miller*, *Matthew* *Modest* and *Jennifer* *Grey*, *Amy* *Gross* and *Courteney* *Cox*, and *Eric* *Boke* and *Helia* *Hase*—*pair* *off* *and* *dress* *up*. PHOTOGRAPHS BY *WILLIAM* *LAXTON*



Daly and *Miller*—*both* *Tammy* *named* *actors*, *dress* *for* *their* *parts*.
Page 106

COLUMNS AND DEPARTMENTS

American Scene

49

CHARLES *LEIGH* *Wilder* *Rodney* *Dangerfield*

Mike Lupica

57

THE *SPECTATOR* *LIES*: *Chewing* *the* *fat* *with* *Tommy* *Laurel*

Jim Harrison

61

THE *RAW* *AND* *THE* *COOKED*: *Driving* *off* *prisons* *in* *Arizona*

George Plimpton

65

HANGING *OVER*: *Seeing* *translating* *the* *San* *Diego* *Spring*

Stanley Bing

69

DETECTIVE *SUMMARY*: *All* *this* *new* *subway* *is* *telling* *me*

The Spindicator

136

THE *SPIN* *DOCTOR* *IS* *IN*: *Hoke* *crustaceans*, *mixed* *bingo*, *com* *puter* *hater* *don* *Have* *Studio* *Blues* (*to* *199* *45*), *standards* *and* *new* *cabbage*, *psychological* *interviews*, *President* *Rush*, *Taser* *guns* *and* *musicals*, *congratulatory* *body* *poes*, *Garth* *Brooks*, *Penelope* *Sheldie*, *and* *much* *much* *more!*
By *MICHAEL* *FLAHERTY* *AND* *GUY* *MARTIN*



The Sound and the Fury

141

LETTERS FROM *READERS*

Backstage with Esquire

161

NOTES ON *CONTRIBUTORS*



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The SIGNATURE
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STYLE

A black and white photograph of a man sitting on a chair outdoors. He is wearing a white short-sleeved polo shirt and white shorts. He is looking down and to his left. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

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[illegible]

Message from F&B

GOLD/PFEIL





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OBSESSION



Calvin Klein

PERFUME

WARRANTY AND PROMOTION

WARRANTY AND PROMOTION

WARRANTY AND PROMOTION

WARRANTY AND PROMOTION

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WARRANTY AND PROMOTION

BACKSTAGE WITH ESQUIRE

IF THE SPECIALLY commissioned art on our cover looks somewhat familiar, you've either been hanging out in museums or galleries lately or storming the barricades of sexism. If not, then welcome to the world of BARBARA KRUGER, who is not only



Barbara Kruger

one of America's most original talents but one of our loudest social and cultural critics as well. Kruger's polemically charged art—merging already-existing photographs and an-
 eyer-catching red boxes and bold white type, here at once urgent, delightful, and against their viewers. "Pictures and words have the power to make us who we are and who we aren't," says Kruger. "The very interested in addressing that power."

If it seems outrageous, then, that Barbara Kruger should use her carefully chosen words to contemplate rules and TV phenomena on Howard Stern's (*Wack Up Your Ear*, page 44), consider that in addition to her art, she has been the film critic for *Artforum* since 1975 and their television critic for the last five years. Also consider that Stern, like Kruger, is vociferous on many important issues of the day. (He's also vicious about body fascism, but no matter.) And if they accomplish nothing else, Barbara Kruger's distinctive images and words in conjunctions of Howard Stern will probably only position off. It was with some trepidation that we dispatched Kruger, Jones



Jack Fritzel

to "Talk Back" Alvin Karpis (*Alvin Karpis: American Bad*, page 46), Jack Kruger, explains why the director of such classic films as *MA/99H*, *Nashville*, and *McGee and Mr. Miller* has Hollywood reeling with his latest, *The Paper Thin Gun*, which turns the mirror on

Hollywood, is the most accurate portrait of an industry since Clifford Odets and Bruce Lee. *Leviathan* dominated the New York newspaper world in *Best of the Best* from Kruger, who has been covering the arts in a serious and vibrant at *New York* for twenty-one years, says that Kruger gets away with her overbearing view of moviemakers because Hollywood has "a per-



Donald Katz

verse sense" of itself. And if *The Paper* is as big financially as it promises to be critically, he'll never see that in that cover again.

Since 1981, Contributing Editor DONALD KATZ has been a regular member of the Gordon Society of Harbor Life, New York, in-
 coming to family stories, reading journals, following musicians. In short, he's moved their history. Four years later, Katz has produced an eight-chapter of their lives called *Home Film* (to be published next month by HarperCollins, *James Aronson* books). Our excerpt, "Just Your Average American Family" (page 14), focuses on the Sixties, the crucial decade for the Gordons. "One of the great losses of the baby-boom cohort is that everyone, in his heart, be-
 lieves he missed the Sixties," says Katz. But so with the Gordons. Katz, who wrote *The Invention of the American* from 1971 to 1974 and then the *Twelve-Calendar* volume, is also the author of *The Big Story*, a history of Sears, Roebuck, & Co.

When Contributing Editor TAN FERRER re-
 turned to the Philippines to cover Imelda Marcos's bid for the presidency ("Power Cockfighting with Pac-Man and the Whipping Willow," page 36), he ran into some old friends—various Marcos supporters who two years earlier had struck him with pistols outside the American embassy in Manila. "I was very impressed with how strongly Marcosians endured," he says of his brief encounter. And when the people were on May 1, Ferrer reports, "we may see the last chapter in U.S.-Philippines relations."

I WANTED TO PUT A FINGER FACE ON THE EMBROIDERED people are in these newspapers," says RICHARD PRIZ, the author of the book *Prize* in his latest novel, *Prize* (to be published by Houghton Mifflin this month). To understand the mechanisms of the novel, Priz immersed himself in the subculture of urban New Jersey and the Bronx, spending the last few years observing "drug dealers, cops, everyone imaginable." The result is as penetrating as it is eye-opening. ("A Hunter Hunter, That's What He Does," page 74) The author of four previous novels including *The Wanderer* and *The Snake*, Priz also wrote the screenplays for *Sea of Love* and *The Color of Money* for which he received an *Academy Award* nomination.



Richard Priz



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Jumpin' Jive

MARY VINSON's print shirts for the Island Trading Company look as if they have to be plugged in and charged up before you put them on. It's that sense of voltage that gives her kaleidoscopic designs and spacey patterns (one's called *Funny Face*, another, *Celestial Staircase*) such a delicious quality. In this case, it also helps to have the six song-and-dance men from the raucous new Cameron Mackintosh Broadway musical *Five Guys Named Moe* wearing your shirts. All cotton, with long sleeves and hand-waxed batik prints, the shirts are loose enough to let you dance in the aisles (as the British audiences have been doing nightly) when these Moe men invoke the spirit of '40s rhythm-and-blues showman Louis Jordan onstage. Yet they're traditional enough to break free of that tired old ethnic-party-shirt motif. The perfect combination of a wild imagination and smooth style—just like a classic Jordan tune. You'll be swinging to "Choo, Choo, Ch'boogie" directly. ■

Five Guys Named Moe: The Moe men strut their stuff in funky cotton shirts from the Island Trading Company of New York. Trousers by Lee; shoes by Bally.

LOOK FOR A WEDGE AND A SPLASH,
AND FIND THE HIDDEN PLEASURE
IN REFRESHING SEAGRAM'S GIN.

Get it?
Now head for
the 19th hole.



MAN AT HIS BEST

TECHNOLOGY

Read It Once

Three very different
types, Kevin Sigge
p., Dennis Ash-
baugh, and William
Gibson, will publish
a book together sometime next

month. Sigge is a pub-
lisher of museum
quality manuscripts
and books, known Ash-
baugh, a New York
artist whose artwork
emphasizes the
complexity of
space-time and
William Gibson is the
author of *Neuromancer*
and *Countdown* and
the virtual god
head to millions of
computer writers.



THE ARTIST: Dennis Ashbaugh is code

between Sigge and Ash-
baugh. "Why don't you guys do
a book together, you know, on
data or something, so that after
you read it once, it disappears?"

Got that? You
read it once and it
disappears. It is to
be called *Agrippa*
(A Book of the Dead).
The physical object
will be a large
somewhat square,
known as graphia
perforata containing
Ashbaugh's original
copper-plate en-
gravings of DNA
codes. Under the
engravings will be
a floppy, inserted
as its own code.
Gibson's story will
be on the disk,
along with a very
cute little compu-
ter virus.

gives like this:
A. Virginia
dash design
loves the
memory dur-
ing the Vir-
giana War for
Canada, mar-
ries, has a kid,
and while
he's at home
taking care of
the baby, de-
cides to write a novel. (Dis-
misses, right?) About halfway
somewhere in the novel to distant
future. Once accidentally, his
anti-wedding stance caused a se-
rial revolution. Now there are
negotiations between the cyber-
punk and whole communities of
current digital humanists busy
hacking their way through cy-
berspace, all over the world.

The Gibson
correlation was

goes like this:
A. Virginia
dash design
loves the
memory dur-
ing the Vir-
giana War for
Canada, mar-
ries, has a kid,
and while
he's at home
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punk and whole communities of
current digital humanists busy
hacking their way through cy-
berspace, all over the world.



THE WRITER: William Gibson, the inventor of
cyberspace and one of self-destructive fiction

The book's publication
party is not likely to be attended by
its publisher or either of the
book's authors. Instead, they've
found a place in Wyoming that is
wired for fiber optics. Some
authors are going to this town
with a floppy of the story, where
they will modify it, once, so
computer bulletin boards (or, in
cyberspace) all over the world.

The virus will of course be
included. The challenge
for Gibson devotees will
be to see if they can remove
all or part of *Agrippa* (A
Book of the Dead).

The story Gibson has
written is about "acciden-
tally" his father, who died
when Gibson was 10. The
process of this book is
with the process of Gib-
son's final experience, part
of the book. It is meant to
be evanescent, but not as
permanent, and that fact-
ly is the point. Those of us
lucky enough to read this
story and absorb the ge-
neous information recorded
in Ashbaugh's art will
have had roughly the same
experience of Gibson's fi-
nal this Gibson had. It
will be recorded, and then
etched, by memory.

—GUY MARRAS

THE PHYSICAL SECRET: A little light reading,
on the end of publishing as we know it



If you were like a bear, you would have a coat that adjusted to the changing seasons. A coat that could fend off the worst snow of winter. Then, somehow, when the thaw came, the coat would lighten just enough so you could face the spring rains and the strenuous hikes of summer.

We haven't quite made such a garment up here at Timberland®. However, we've done the next best thing.

We've created an entire line of warm-weather clothing that provides the same protection as our rugged winter gear, but calibrated to the particular extremes of spring and summer.

It's common knowledge that most manufacturers of clothing and footwear don't mostly lighten up on the weight of their products for the warmer months of the year.



of service under harsh conditions without developing cracks or soles.

Then there's the buck hiker, for surprising lightness and snug-gaiting comfort make you masters of all the advanced footwear technology at work.

Technology that includes our exclusive Timberland anti-gripping sole,

lightweight yet heavy on traction. The buck hiker is equipped with a separate shock-absorbing insole, 110, featuring D-ring hardware, shock vent drainage system and quick drying Condore® Nylon to ward off sticks and stones year after year.



GREENE BEAR
When Ape Bear
FURRYFOOT
KARVE ANTI-SHOCK
HARD-CALLED
TOWN "THE BEAR"
TINY MULE
ANTHROPO

WHAT TO WEAR WHEN YOU COME OUT OF HIBERNATION.

They lighten up on quality as well.

We ensure this information helps you as much as it does us.

Exhibition

of the United States become far more active in the rugged outdoors after March 21 than before it. When cable fever takes in spring fever.

Given this statistic, let us introduce you to the products shown on these pages.



Suede

Taken together, they're a top-to-bottom demonstration of how you can experience true Timberland quality as the days lengthen and you intensify your involvement in outdoor pursuits.

The weathered canvas coat will give you a lot more than a spring "look." It has the gumption to stand up to anything from March winds to August hurricanes. Details include strong 8.8 oz. premium cotton canvas, plenty of extra back and shoulder room, wide-open gussets, reinforced elbow patches and rain-stopping storm flaps. Then, of course,

Brick

Ample

there's the Timberland signature: a drawstring collar, easily leather-bound.

The two-strap boat shoe is classic proof that the most seaworthy vessels in the world are still built by hand. Soaring concrete construction cradles your entire foot in handwoven, water-resistant, premium Timberland leather. The skid-resistant sole keeps you on your feet when the sea turns soggy. The quality leathers are handpicked and tanned to give you

Neat

Highgate DC

See Reader Service at page 128



BOOTS, SHOES, CLOTHING.
WIND, WATER, EARTH AND SKY.

New York

When I first fantasized about getting into the wine business, I thought it would be just like a commercial. But then I realized what would you expect from an executive creative director? I saw myself walking through vast fields of vines in slow motion. Holding my grapes up to the sun. And this regal Aaron Copeland music would be everywhere. Anyway, I left the ad agency, and I was at, and opened a winery on fifteen acres of the worst wine producing property on Long Island. I spent the first two years just trying to overcome my own ignorance. And I guess we produce a really nice Merlot, and a Chardonnay that took silver at the San Francisco Wine Festival. What made me do it? I don't know. Maybe I got nostalgic for the life I had as a kid. Always outside. We lived in our jeans and T-shirts and Chucks. And they suited the kind of stuff we were doing. Like mowing lawns, running around the neighborhood. I've got three pairs of shoes now. Boots, boat shoes and Chucks. That's all I need. No suits. It's a great feeling. Oh, can I put in a plug for the winery? It's called The Bridgehampton Winery. Come out and

CONVERSE visit
It's what's inside that counts. US



M A N A T H
E S T

KURT COBAIN Off the Charts

A World Out of Time




ETHNICITY: Henry Kaiser and David Lindley jogg, and Malagasy's Remy

Henry Kaiser and David Lindley in Malagasy, Volume 1 (Jazzville). For many people, don't get much further away from the island of Madagascar, recently located in the Indian Ocean off the southeast coast of Africa. And yet the musical tradition of the 15 million or so Malagasy people, while generally dominated by highland rhythms and oddly fierce guitar, and song of nature, is impenetrable Malagasy, has some strikingly familiar accents for Western ears.

This CD—the first in a proposed five-volume series—was a national event through the tradition, from the intensely black pop of dance-floor king Remy and the lush, romantic-

band style of Roger Georges to the various instrumental excursions of a guitarist called D Gary and the grippingly primitive outbursts of a screaming, semi-sung singer named Miana Sina. The whole wildly proper is a tribute to the mosaic of guitar and producer Henry Kaiser, who's made a career out of musical cross-pollination and, over the years, has worked with musicians ranging from Herbie Hancock and the Roots' Black Thought to the minimalist composer Terry Riley and avant-garde New York Schoolers like John Cage.

—*Tommaso*

Jungle Hop

DON'T MISTAKE (Specialty). One of the great lost chapters in black-rock-'n'-roll history, Don Harris and Dewey Terry were not players and singers, and on L.A.'s Specialty label in the late '50s, they recorded the original versions of "Big Boy Blues," "Warmer Jams," and "Leave It All Up to You"—songs, alas, that only later earned gold in the hands of the O'Jays, the Flamin' Groovies, and Dale Gribble. The Righteous Brothers also covered two of their tracks (and emulated their rhapsodic vocal style), but the originals still tell—as you can now, at least, confirm for yourself. **B**

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JOHN MARIANI Eat and Run

The Rise of the Neo-Creole

WHAT YOU should know about creoles out in New Orleans these days is that a new breed of young chefs is breaking free of the Creole stereotypes that for decades kept the local restaurants from evolving much beyond the dichotomy of gumbo, oysters Rockefeller, and beignets shrimp. (Yikes! No, I mean shrimp.)



BLACKENED TEMPUS FUGIT BY ARNOLD KOTH

and watch them playing songs that we didn't know...and then some bridge or someone we didn't know would come, and we'd watch our hands play it. It was a strange two weeks."

The results here are extraordinary—especially Katarin's success. "Mama's Restaurant," D'Gany's glowing poster piece "Vivamus," and Maria Sera's possibly earth quake-inducing "Lemmas." The influences are sometimes hard to figure. There are Polynesian overtones to some music naturally—but also fast folk world mixes and even suggestions of American mountain music. And, some how, Katarin's occasional electro-guitar sounds fit right in, too. Although it's definitely a collaboration, as opposed to a pure neo-creole movement, A World Out of Time is very much a world unto itself. ■

LINGO

THE WORD different is certainly politically flexible, particularly in the hands of adult expatriates. Something, or someone, may now be differently advantaged, as in poor, differently sized, as in obese, or differently interesting, as in boring. We find this all a bit differently logical, as in wrong. ■

From The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook by Henry Beard and Charles Crut (Farrar)

green meat and black beans, and Libanese chocolate gingerbread week-appraise anyone. Since opening in December, Miki's has been fringed with New Orleans who find it the most interesting new place in town.

After a dual flag with monochrome Creole, Gaudreau's, set in an antique pharmacy, has been renamed and splendidly revived by new chef Larkin Selman, who has wisely kept the focus of Creole cooking intact while marrying them to other regional ingredients in dishes like roasted shrimp on saffron rice with black beans and roasted pepper puree or shrimp-and-macaroni chorizo with tomato and basil.

At the reliable and sophisticated Polaris Club, in the Quarter, chef Richard Hughes

has expanded the possibilities of Louisiana classics like jambalaya with smoked chicken, sausage, and saffron, while adding personal touches like blue-crab chili and braised lamb neck and oxtail to the repertoire.

The Brennan family has new Commander's Mr. B's, and the Palace Café, have debuted Baccus, a stunning new restaurant in the Vieux Carre with Gothic archways, glorious Vercian chandeliers, and Venetian-style painting over rough cement floors. Chef Francesco Saverio has fashioned a menu full of the vibrant flavors of black olives, garlic, and cognac sautéed with fresh pasta and breads and pizzas baked in a wood-fired oven. His grilled polenta with macaroni and his real chop Val-d'Arenas are outstanding. ■

PHIL PATTON Design



FINDING EDGE: The massive Stuck clock faces toward the millennium.

Fins de Siècle



SHRIMP-FLAVERED Whisker. Wayne H clock is the head, with the remaining dial, as if it were a Stuck's hero.

Philip K. Dick—who liked to see his novels specifically in the strange future of 1999. The clock's hands are the naked blades of a propeller.

This is appropriate: The millennial scene is an anticipation of something about to be the last. We've begun to catch up on science fiction, and technology is no longer a gleaming promise. HAIL was supposed to have been unveiled in 1999.

but instead of 2000, we get a world like *Mad Max*: Instead of robots, we get leopards and cars that roll as we feel the light on. Hail is laying off, and Phil Axt, which once took more time for the moon, is gone.

Dangars talks such things to heart—and express them by hand. As it always does when an old century wears a sense of tension and foreboding—call it a parallelism syndrome—shows itself in the shapes of things around us. Design typically grows darker and yet more elegant. The 1990s are art nouveau

for people that would be a home with the future—a nervous chuckle at the future of the past.

And it is more than the simple sense of the flipping calendar that causes us. At the recent Edge of the Millennium conference hosted by the Cooper-Hewitt National Museum of Design, prognosticators theorized on "technology as the new religion"—what its users start to feel references to the end of religion, the end of history, War. Warden's *Heel the End of the World*, and want to contemplate the possible end of design. *Apocalypse now!*

The millennium as moment is best expressed in Stuck's clock, a visual model of the edge genre. It offers an amazing example, only those naked hands, dangerous and relentless the great imperator's spoke, the fin of the future slicing toward us through a sea of seconds. The shape of the hands tells us that time is always the short, sharp cutting edge of now. Who needs numbers? Ask this clock when time is at, and the answer is always "later than you think." At



FINDING EDGE

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ROBERT TALBOT



PAGES OF A NATION: Gertrude Kasebier's previously unpublished photograph of Haly Fag and Big Turpin, circa 1899

Return of the Native American

UNLIKE EDWARD CURTIS, whose famous Indian photographs are now being attacked as overly sentimental, Gertrude Kasebier dispensed with prevailing notions of the noble savage. Her studio portraits of Sioux who performed in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show between 1898 and 1901 are what she called "Mienances that are biographies." In 1984 Kasebier's granddaughter donated 113 of her glass-plate negatives to the Library of Congress. Now a show at the Museum of Modern Art, opening April 23, and a new Kasebier biography by Barbara Michaels (Abrams) finally give wider exposure to these remarkable Native American portraits, revealing human beings American history never knew. —ALEXANDRA ANDERSON-SPENCER

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PAUL SCHNEIDER Home Housing

Art on the Beach

THE PLACE: Venice, California. Eighty-seven years after Albert Kahnway had come dug to create a "dope" city on the Pacific, thirty years after it had become "a dump on the beach," a decade after the first mortgage-related disease had inspired architects to design pretty homes on the under-ground landscape, the first phase of generational may have arrived. Venice is getting its coastal design.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE HOUSE AS ART: It begins in the late eighties with Fred Fisher's Caplin House and the "Venice" house by the architect duo of Thom Mayne and Michael Rotondo known as Morphosis. In 1980 Frank Gehry built the Splitter House and followed it a few years later with a controversial and controversial masterpiece—the beach shack epitomized for House Flipper. Venice's beachfront became an epitome of what architecture critic David Gehard calls "self-conscious, avant-garde, highest modern architecture."

VENICE HERE AND NOW: Frank Gehry recently completed the new Chiswick-style headquarters, recognizable by the dove-gray sea of windows in the middle, and "Gehry led" Frank Gehry has revamped the old Charles and Ray Kohns estate for another ad firm



VENICE REMAINS: New architecture, new effects, new houses, new faces

As Antonio Predock-designed open house on the beach was a 1990 American Institute of Architects house award. But if there is a trend in dwellings in Venice, it is toward a darker, more user-friendly, modern look designed to appeal to incoming professionals who, one critic sniffs, "think simply having a modern house is quite easy."

THE MARKET: Venice is still reasonable by L.A. standards, though earning status as one of the most expensive in the city. A rough four-upper in a rough neighborhood—there are pockets of Venice, generally

not those on the beach or the beach, but remain under the (unconcerned) gaze of L.A.'s real estate press—recently sold in one day for just over \$1 million. A modern house is around \$1.5 million for "a very detailed little two-down" on a standard four-by-five-foot lot. "While great" but (no one) are agencies more, while most from \$1 million to \$1.5 million. A two-down actually on the beach recently went for \$1.5 million, and if you want a ready-made place in the new style, be pre-

pared to spend anywhere up to \$1.5 million.

THE OUTLOOK: Most prices are down only 8 to 10 percent from the peaks of three years ago, as opposed to a citywide drop of 25 percent. Venice's reputation as a bargain primarily explains the soft landing, as does the heightened mobility of the neighborhood due to last year's rebuilding of Venice Boulevard. In the first weeks of January, following the crash in interest rates, first-time buyers looking for bargains and would-be designers with several million in disposable income returned to the local market in force. Sales are up and prices are stable.

HOUSE THAT BALL: The usual procedure is to tear down, but be short Sprinkled and, the out-of-the-house and the out-of-the-house is a revolutionary idea.

THE LISTING

Designed by architectural luminary Antonio Predock, this Venice-style, four-bedroom, four-bath, four-car garage, modern house, central vacuum system, waterfront, and a waterfront planting, which is being built on a 10,000 sq ft lot. The original \$1.5 million asking price is down to a mere \$1.1 million. Source: Don Douglas Company, Marina del Rey



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AMERICAN SCENE: CHARLES LEERHSEN

Whatever Happened to Rodney Dangerfield?

IT IS NEW YEAR'S EVE, and Rodney Dangerfield is down in Florida, coughing and wheezing his way through an act that—even on nights like this—is exactly fifty-seven minutes, or 345 jokes, long. It is not a pretty sight, even if you're a sucker for honky-tonk guys who perspire profusely. Rodney's face and scalp reddened alarmingly with each strangled sneeze, setting off the gray roots in his show-biz-blond hair. His eyes, perpetually puffy under normal circumstances, now water uncontrollably. A few hours later, Rodney will check himself into a Fort Lauderdale hospital for a brief stay. But right now he makes no reference to his upper-respiratory distress. Rather, he rants on about the *unfidelity* of his wife ("I asked her, 'Why don't you tell me when you have an orgasm?' She said, 'Because you're never around'"), the stupidity of his girlfriend ("It takes her an hour and a half to watch *M*A*S*H*"), and the harshness of his own childhood ("I told my father, 'I'm tired of running around in circles.' He got mad and rushed down my outer floor.") He gets, he says on more than one occasion, absolutely no *re*—oh, *rephrased*.

Talk about your serious spritzing: Anyone seated in the first three rows of the Sunrise Theatre probably could use a penicillin shot. And yet there is something moving about the sight of Rodney, rolling with the twin punches of age and illness while firing off wicked combinations of one- and two-liners with impeccable comic timing, even if most of the jokes are *shower-with-wear* than *his* nuts. This is one guy, biles and gentlemen, who knows how to work a *thrust*.

Now Rodney rethinks his endearing exit line—I can't wait to get the fuck out of here—and the crowd is on their feet. Technically, their reaction is spontaneous. But like the fifty-seven minutes and the 345 jokes, it, too, can be depended on. The people have adored Rodney since his first



How comedy's eight-hundred-pound gorilla fell lower than his own self-esteem

shuffled onto *The Ed Sullivan Show*—pale forehead beaded, and he snickered—and made them laugh from somewhere deep in the box springs of their *Bavarianhausens*. And nearly twenty years later the public was still on his side, ready to embrace him in the parthenon of American humor: Rodney on the mad-Eighths was Johnny's favorite *Tough Shave* guest, and he stole every scene of those award-winning *Miller Lite* ads. He had specials on HBO and an album called *Rodney Rodney*. But most of all he had a movie career: *Caddyshack* began *Easy Money*, which began *Back to School*, the second-highest-grossing film of 1985. People magazine hailed him on its cover as one of Hollywood's hottest hunkies.

"Oh, but life was sweet," says Stafford Borg, a beefy *Concessionaire* store owner, who was Rodney's bodyguard from 1981 to 1989. "We had huge hotel suites, Warner's flew us around in its private jet, and the women were the stuff of which memories are made." And then Rodney pulled away. Just like that. Just as, on the Sunrise stage now, he is bowing and waving and backing steadily toward his mysterious offstage exit. "It's an absolute tragedy what happened to Rodney," says the head of a major Hollywood studio. "He passed away one beautiful *coaster*."

Why? What happened?

One answer, it seems, is that the comedian got tangled up in his own anger—and became a belligerent, vindictive superego as obsessed with getting even for innumerable slights and alleged screwings that he brought his professional life to a self-destructive standstill. Rodney

Charles Leerhsen is a senior writer at Newsweek. His is currently at work on a book with Brandon Tabbeth to be published later this year.

get reinfused in a lawsuit with Warner's own Goldblum (it's a once-promising project that melted down into a lousy disaster starring Chevy Chase and Jackie Mason. He made as many demands for money and attention that he won't be dead in Queens, the studio where his biggest hit, *Back to School*, was made. Then, in 1991, Rodney died a lawsuit against Turner's Palace that cost him whatever goodwill remained in the hearts of movie-business executives who'd once been content to count their money and overlook the starlet's mercurial behavior.

Rodney had been on such a roll that it took a few years before anyone around him left the party. Then gradually even the demand for his concert act—the one thing he'd kept doing, and not just during his politicking, boring, sloping, performing, in made the same way at Tennessee Williams was still fine-tuning *Summer Night Dream* when he died—yes, even the demand for that started to slow down. The phone at the studio apartment that Rodney shared with Lesley Brown's old buddy, Joe Aron, seldom rang (Rodney, masterful of apocryphal, accounts for own gag). The industry people no longer said, when he played Vegas "Leave me, would you, Rodney? We're flying in." If his name came up at all in industry conversation, it was because someone had just said something about infidelity or ugliness, and it triggered the memory of one of Rodney's old gags. "Only then, maybe, would somebody say, 'Yip, do you think Rodney Dagfield will ever make a comeback?'"

Now it is 1995, and Rodney has introduced two pieces of product onto the marketplace: a seven-year hiatus. One is an animated feature called *Ben Campbell* that was finally made. The other is a racy little comedy called *Loisday*, in which Rodney, suddenly looking every last attribute of his seventy years, plays the coach of a girls' soccer team. So the long wait for more Rodney stuff is over; but the questions remain: What was happened to Rodney Dagfield? Because Rodney really had something going down, he was, as one acquaintance who has worked with him says, "off for away from being the modern-day 'W.C. Fields.' And these two new projects have effectively put him on the Hollywood life line."

Finding out how this happened isn't easy—and not just because Rodney himself

refuses to be interviewed. Of the starlet's close friends, only Andrew Dice Clay would speak about Rodney and he didn't want to say much. Rodney's roommate, Joe Aron, his pal Sam Raimi, his lawyer, Alan Crutman, his daughter-in-law, his former bodyguard, his personal publicist, the Paramount publicist, the producer of *Loisday*, Al Roddy, and Bud Friedman, the owner of the lounge in L.A.—all of these people either refused to return phone calls or declined comments. And as for the larger circle of former Rodney friends—Robert Klein, Jackie Mason, Joan Rivers, David Byrne, and almost every starlet who has ever been Rodney's opening act—no, sorry, most of them won't talk about him, either. "It's a case of 'I wouldn't have anything nice-to-say-that-up,'" says Bremer. "I don't want to say word one."

All this silence, of course, isn't a story for so, too, did the last George Clooney while on *Erin* Comedy Club in Shanghai Bay. "We used to call him Andy Jack because his name was Jack Ray then, and he was always mad at people," said Shultz. "Now he's not Jack anymore, but he's still angry." But about what Rodney has made millions and seen his stage name become an American superstition meaning "one who does not get sufficient respect." "What is his problem, really?" did *Seinfeld* friend like Lewis, Starnes, who was Rodney's agent in the 1980s, says. "The key to understanding Rodney is that he didn't make it big all he was maligned. The more money, money, and women he got, the madder it made him. He'd see three headless women. Why didn't I have all these things? Is he stupid?"

"I think of him as the ultimate sex warrior," says a source, who declined to be named. And if that's the truth, it's also, to be sure, understandable. It is one thing to beg some Queens nightclub owner for just one fifty-five-dollar fee when you're twenty years older to be handled right and to love it, as Rodney once was, a top lady date. The trouble is that when Rodney got ready to play his revenge, the Queens Ensigns dancers would scowled him worst around respect. So he turned his rage in the people who represented the show-business circle

known. Bob Hope, for example. When Hope dropped by Rodney's dressing room one night, Rodney let him and his lady at the corner and then greeted him nastily. "So, Bob Hope, do you ever get around with those girls on those 1980's shows? And then there was the Hilton Beck blowup.

"You tell me, please, why she was so angry at me," Beck loudly shouted, in a Theater District restaurant called the *Symphony Cafe*, where I mentioned Rodney's name. "I once came backstage at his club," the eighty-four-year-old comedian went on, "and he was standing there completely soaked with sweat after a show. I said, 'Rodney, I'm going to give you some advice, something I learned over many years in the business. Rodney,' I told him, 'wear an undershirt. It will absorb the sweat. I gave him that, and what did he do, he turned on me, viciously. He looked me to everyone on both sides. I think he needs, you know, professional help."

In Vegas, where he was making \$25,000 a night, Rodney burned the beds of casino executives when his dressing room was not quite right. "I bet you don't do this to these boys!" He often told his bodyguard, "Keep the front office happy making the same mistake—they buy the act," meaning that he is not the easy-to-push-around schlemiel that he pretends to be.

Not were things much different in Hollywood, where Rodney used the power that came with box-office success to reject demands and to script screenplays into oblivion. Jeffrey Schenkel, a screenwriter who worked with Rodney on a script he called "The Game," says Rodney often stood there muttering in "giving me words for something that he was never able to articulate down in flesh or paper. His attitude was always, 'These bastards can't tell me what to do.' The wonder is that any movie got made or on some people close to the production of *Loisday* say. The first thing Rodney did after he arrived in Texas for the shooting of that film was to announce that a new son had for him and that said son would have to pick up and move to Denver.

Rodney is used to getting things his way. Schenkel, who lived in Rodney's apartment the months while working on several projects, says, "Every day was the same. First get up late and put on a bathrobe. At one in the morning we'd be seeing ultra-hot food and watching at the table for secret service on chandeliers. Sometimes a woman Rodney had met on the road would fly in to be with him for a day.

PORTRAIT OF A QUITTER



Photo by Robert D. Hirsch for LIFE

About six years ago, I decided to stop smoking. So I tried cold turkey. It seemed to work for a while. But within three months, my wife caught me smoking cigarettes out the bathroom window.

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When I was a kid,
I would run down the hallway of my house,
plant my front foot just outside of the kitchen,
and jump through the sliding doors,
into the sea,
over the green shag carpeting,
and I would land somewhere
in front of my Mom's
red leather easy chair.
It was on these occasions,
as I danced on and the moon,
imagining that I had just broken
the world record,
that my Mom would usually point out
that I had scratched on my knee off,
or that my jump was wind-aided.
My Mom was a real comedian.
But then one day, I'm 27 years old and I'm in Tokyo,
and the scoreboard tells me I'm in second place.
So I take off down the runway,
hit the board clean, and leave the ground.
And I think about mothers,
and dunking from the free-throw line,
and gliders, and slingshots, and Sir Isaac Newton,
and oh.
And then everything gets really quiet.
And as I stare at the horizon,
at the peak of my jump,
I think I see,
just for a second,
my Mom's red leather easy chair
at the end of the pit.

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Air Cross "Polar" shoe

Mike Powell—World record holder, long jump.

THE SPORTING LIFE: MIKE LUPICA

The Skinny on Tommy Lasorda



HE STANDS THERE in the cool, dark hallway at Dodger-town, in Florida, admiring all these photographs of old ballplayers the way people admire paintings hung in great museums. "These are the best pictures you'll ever see," Tommy Lasorda says. There is no lounge or jukebox, no profanity. Just Lasorda surrounded by Dodgers in black and white, alone with the last forty years of his life.

The man makes jagged entries through big glass doors at either end of the hall. Lasorda stops at the first photograph. It is a team picture from 1947.

"There's Clyde King," he says, smiling at the young face underneath the cap with the famous Brooklyn D. "Duke Walker. Bobby Bragan. Rex Barney. . . Who the hell is that? Oh, yeah. Vic Lombardi, left left-handed pitcher. Mike's Jackie, of course. And the Waz."

He moves down the row of photographs, past all-time Dodger greats like Bender and Campanella, looking heartbreakingly young and strong, past Dazzy Vance, to a picture of Ralph Branca throwing a pitch to Eddie Stanley. "Look at the look on Ralph," he says, pointing to Branca's nose.

Dodgerstown, in Vero Beach, is the magic kingdom of baseball, the most splendid spring-training place in the world. It has motel-like accommodations for the players, streets named for Kousser and Drysdale, Campanella and Robinson. It has Holmes Stadium, a dreary little ball park, and two golf courses.

Tommy Lasorda presides over all of this like Dazzy himself, welcoming players, jelling at the helo, greeting everybody by name. He has been part of the Dodgers family since 1949. "I've been married to my wife for forty-two years," he says, "to the Dodgers for forty-three." A little left-handed himself, he pitched only fifty-eight innings in the majors. On this spring-training morning, as he begins his managerial season as Dodger manager, I ask him how long he expects to keep it up. Bill Russell, the ex-Dodger shortstop and the favorite to replace Lasorda when he steps down, was

sent to Albuquerque this season to manage triple-A ball.

"I'm nowhere near being ready to step," Lasorda says. "We are out of the hallway and into the Florida morning, walking across a perfectly groomed practice field. 'Let me tell you a story,' he says. "That was after Whitney Herring quit as manager of the Cardinals. I'm being interviewed by this guy Char Coppock in Chicago. You know Coppock, right?"

I tell him I do. It doesn't really matter. Lasorda likes to make you part of the stories he tells all day every day, spring training through October.

"Anyway, Coppock says to me, 'Tommy, do you ever give any thought to the time when you might quit?' And I say to him, 'Let me tell you a story.'"

Looks
slim, talks
fast, and
is still the
longest-
running
show in
baseball



He even puts stories in his stories sometimes.

"When I was managing in the minor leagues for eight seasons, I used to pray to God every night. I'd say, 'Dear God, if you can find it in your heart, please let me manage in the big leagues.' I managed in winter ball for six more years, trying to refine my skills, and I used to pray the same way, only I had refined the prayer by then. 'Dear God, I don't just want to be a manager in the big leagues, I want to manage the Dodgers.'"

Lasorda steps now, outside the elegant little ball park, into a couple of hours from his noon workout.

"You can call me crazy," he says. "But those prayers were answered. That dream came true for me. It keeps coming true because I've still got this job. And I'm not about to give it to somebody else anytime soon."

You don't have to love him or love his act to understand that one crucial thing: Tommy Lasorda was born to work this place.

IF YOU'VE EVER BEEN INTO the World Series, managed in the All-Star game," Lasorda says. "And those seasons are on the team and season. There goes the film fast guy!" You can easily make a case that he is the most famous baseball manager in the world. Tommy certainly wouldn't stop you. He enjoys being a celebrity, and it

doesn't seem to bother him that his fame has as much to do with his huckstering as with the Dodgers. He is friendly with Sinatra, a magnet to the famous Hollywood sports crowd, and, after three years, his office bears any L.A. power musician. Lasorda, it seems, is his own worst enemy. Some people think of him as a phony, a self-promoter, a hustler. They look at him and see someone who really wants to be opening for Sinatra.

"People are going to think what they're going to think," Lasorda says. "I'm not going to change their minds. I've never said to take orders for a game. I've never said, 'Hey, I didn't bring Jay Howard, or whatever, in right there, so wouldn't have and wouldn't have anyone?' He runs down the list of famous cities, persons, World Series. 'Does that make me great? You tell me.'"

The young managing men of baseball are Tom Kelly, Tony La Russa, Lou Piniella, and Jerry Leyland. Kelly has won two World Series in the last five years. La Russa, and last season, was in close struggle—winning one, losing to Lasorda and Piniella. For now, though, the only working major-league manager is Sparky Anderson and Tommy Lasorda. Anderson, the younger of the two, has won three World Series and is still the only man to win one in both the American and National leagues.

Lasorda lives the regular life in right with a man that didn't belong anywhere near October. It was one of the finest managing jobs ever. In the NBC program show his game four, Bob Costas suggested—quite seriously—that Lasorda's batting order was one of the wisest in World Series history. Steve Buscemi, Franklin Doolittle, Mickey Rourke, Mike Drive, John Shelby, Mike Brown, Danny Hays, Jeff Hamilton, and Alfredo Griffin.

"Let me tell you a story," Lasorda says. "I made 'I had one of the things to say to

You can easily make the case that he is the most famous baseball manager. Tommy would not stop you.

that team things to fire them up. Now we've got the World Series in reach, we're about two games to win, and for the first time in my life, I'm speechless. Then I hear Kelly saying what he said. I go crazy. I say, 'Did you hear what Costas said? The wisest batting order in the history of the World Series! Are you going to let him say that? We go out and win. To this day, La

Russa thanks I got Costas up to it."

Only then, after that team and that season, did people begin to talk about Lasorda as one of the best managers of his time.

I ask him for his opinion.

"Let me ask you a question," he says. "You think Willie was a great manager?"

"Yes."

"How many times did he win?"

"The World Series?"

Lasorda nods.

"He won once."

"How many times did he win?"

"Two."

"I don't know what extent somebody can get from that," Lasorda says. "But I'll tell you this much. If I could say anything about anyone's," He runs down the list of famous cities, persons, World Series. "Does that make me great? You tell me."

There are all kinds of stereotypes: computer managers, push button managers, out-of-control managers like Billy Martin, and those like Walter Alton, who won for years, and yet no one can remember what they managed like. Lasorda has been a people manager. He has worked out Dodger room every day for forty-three years. Don Dorflinger, who has never been baseball's most happy fellow, has said, "If you can't enjoy playing for Tommy, you can't enjoy playing."

He prods and teases and jokes and hugs. He holds together a team in trouble—during times or a batting team—better than any coach or manager I know. He has won with teams that couldn't catch the ball, and he has won with teams that weren't too good at hitting it.

Staring out by the pool, close enough to the parking lot to greet players, their wives and children, Lasorda is going closer to his Sunday workout. These days, he doesn't

just manage the Dodgers, he hosts them.

"What's the best managing decision you ever made?" I ask him.

"Bringing Hershiser in to game four of the '86 playoffs against the Mets," he says. "We're up a run in the twelfth inning and loaded. And I'm out of pitchers except for Hershiser, who started the day before. Tim Lincecum, who's going to start game five, is back at Manhattan in his hotel room. I need one out—Brett, who's back in the game and even the series. I call for Hershiser. [Hershiser] He pops out McGinnis."

I ask Lasorda what he would have done if the Mets had not the game, and Hershiser has not had as much time as four innings.

"Great managers always have a plan," he says. "And I had one."

"What was the plan?"

"My pitchers were at the game. I was going to have them throw the F—ing light out."

The Expos came calling at 11 p.m. The Braves asked for permission to talk over. And Steinbrenner of the Yankees always made it clear he could work his race. Lasorda stayed still in Dodgerman.

Last season, he lost his only son, Tommy, also known as Spunky—who died of pneumonia at the age of thirty-three.

"This is the only way I can explain it," Lasorda says. "I'll tell you. I and I got married, we had plans to talk to God. Okay? Got right in for a meeting and God said, 'Would you like a son? How would that be? I would've said, 'Great. But then God said, 'There's a catch. You only get the boy for thirty-three years.' You know what I would have said? 'I want the boy.'"

Two fathers pass by with their sons on a tour of Dodgerman. The sons, both four years old, are carrying miniature Dodger bats. Lasorda knows one of the fathers.

"You want to play some ball?" he says. For a half hour, he uses baseball to the boys, chatting at them to get their hands up. He the big league do, spread their legs into a leg-bag stance, watch the ball. And of course, before very long, he has them running that they love the Dodgers and their Uncle Tommy. It is time for work, but the morning says for another hour.

Lasorda takes the fathers and their sons to the clubhouse. He wants them all around the team building. "Let me show you these pictures," he says to his new audience. He gives right where he started before, with 1957. He looks very happy. It won't happen that way again, for the Dodgers or anybody at



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THE RAW AND THE COOKED: JIM HARRISON

Coming to Our Senses



I TOOK A VERY LONG FALL that had apparently been waiting for me way up Hog Canyon. The ridge line looked good for Mearns quail, and I scrambled up in defiance of gravity and good sense, forgetting that the backcountry is always trying to get you to self-destruct. A loose rock perched on another rock, no doubt for some, was my downfall. I slipped, whirled, spun, slid, then plummeted, ending up on a pile of sharp rocks, deep within which the dead

foot fell, so my experience, though troubling, was scarcely unique.

Of course, everyone knows that old Goethe saw "such a poet the gods exact for song, so become what we sing," a rather odd note for the man writing an exhaustive study of fireplaces or rock angles. Just this morning, looking up a border canyon, I was disturbed by a peculiar odor that grew stronger with the trail. Near a steep trailing from beneath a mass of boulders, I saw the large, feline tracks, and nearby beneath a mountain's thicket, there was the spot of a mountain lion, the same a measure of pain and scolded fur, which brought me, finally, to my senses.

I've spoken of this to no one yet, and because of the

lead date, by the time you read this column, it will have gone one way or the other. I may be lost to the ages, but an aspect of this transfiguration is not to care about such trifles. My cohorts at PEN are welcome to split up the shreds of my immortality. The obvious downside of this condition—say, public toilets and that sort of thing—aren't what it might seem: as you have become more curious than judgmental. There was an embarrassing moment in a supermarket, yesterday, the filled tray of "bacon," where with Pincock I was buying three pounds of protein for a barbecue. A mature woman in tennis togs of startling attractiveness paused the cheese display, and my body became apologetic with an involuntary humping motion. No one noticed except a very old lady who raised her cane, pointed it at me, and said, "Bing," a living precursor to feminism.



Hunting in Arizona, the author finds that falling down a canyon has its upside



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CUTTY SARK



SCOT'S WHISKY

UNCOMBOMBED SMOOTH

HANGING OUT: GEORGE PLIMPTON

Overture for Imposter



A FEW NIGHTS AGO during an intermission at Avery Fisher Hall, a friend in the next seat asked if in the pursuit of participatory journalism I had ever conducted a symphony orchestra.

"Natch," I replied, crossing my legs and leaning back in my seat in a show of suavity. In truth, my heart dropped a beat because it brought back an extremely disquieting experience.

"You look pale," she said.

"The problem was that I couldn't read music," I said. "At least orchestral music. And that was only part of the problem."

I explained that I had been invited to conduct the San Diego Symphony as part of the festivities to raise money for local public broadcasting. They wanted me to prepare Leonard Bernstein's overture to *Candide*.

"I know the piece," she said. "Dick Cavett used part of it for the theme music for his television show."

"Right. Very spangly stuff. The whole thing lasts about five minutes."

"And you accepted?"

I said I hadn't been able to resist. What he not wondered what it would be like to stand in front of seventy-odd musicians and tap the baton on the stand to get the violins arched under clars, the wood instruments and horns roared to the lips, the musicians straining for the downbeat that gets it all started. The nearest thing to this is putting on a cassette and, if there's no one around the house, conducting the music with a Venus number-two pencil.

"Exactly," said my friend.

"I had a month or so to get prepared," I said. "I did a lot of Venus-number-two conducting in front of the cassette player. I brought a Walkman and listened to Bernstein conducting the piece as I bicycled around New York. And guess what? I went down to G. Schirmer music store and purchased the orchestral score. I had no idea what I was looking at as I turned the pages in front of the cassette player. Sometimes the music would fade with two pages to go."

She laughed. "I'll bet you took the score out to San Diego."

"Absolutely." I felt my face redden. "On the plane I hid it up as people in the nearby seats could see I was reading an ancient score! I really played it to the hilt."

I told her that in fact I got myself so pumped up I toyed with the idea of augmenting my performance with a Duran

Duran-like move—something along the lines of one of her favorite hits, which was to walk out to the podium, face the orchestra, and make an abrupt motion with his baton, producing a sharp line from his musicians—pumped up, of course—upon which he would turn to the audience and remark: "See how easy it is!"

"Did they go for it?"

"Not at all," I said. "The conductor was a guy named David Afanador, French born, very serious. He wasn't interested in any Duran-like stunts. He just wanted me to rehearse the concert with the orchestra. No fooling around. So a half hour before the public performance, he took me out to the podium and introduced me to his musicians. He handed me the baton—the rock, musicians call it—and left for the wings."

I turned out of my seat, I said. "You know, my feeling at that point was one of extreme confidence. I truly believed I was going to swing an extraordinary performance out of the orchestra. After all, I had conducted the piece hundreds of times with my Venus number-two pencil. I could practically hear the music from just in front of me. I had perfected a quivering motion with my left hand to bring out a third from the strings. I had a little harmonic-like leap programmed in there at one point. I tapped the podium steady with my neck. The music must have come up. We began."

"Did Mr. Afanador approve?" she asked.

"Not at all," I said. "Frankly, I thought my reaction was fairly true to the *Candide* I had played endlessly on my Walkman. But when Mr. Afanador came striding back onstage, I noticed his expression was grim. He stepped up on the podium and took the stick away from me—a somewhat inconsistent gesture, I thought. Looking out at his musicians, he said at last: 'You will be playing the overture before the public in twenty minutes or so. I want you to do something quite against the grain for orchestral musicians.' He made a slight gesture toward me. 'Do not look at the score.'"

"You sucked him?"

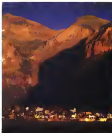
"Are you kidding?" I told her that I meekly followed him down to his dressing room. He explained that he hadn't meant to sound so hard on me in front of the musicians. . . . But after all he couldn't jeopardize his musicians' reputation by handing them over to someone . . . well, with very little experience.

"I would have sucked him," she said blithely.

"He then told me what to do," I continued. "He limited me back the stick and said that he wanted me to treat them off. But after that, I should make no sudden movements, for that would throw them off. 'After the downbeat,' he said, 'I want you to wobble. Wobble like a cobra.' God, he was serious. Just wobble," he kept saying.

"Did he show you how?" she asked.

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HANGING OUT

"I don't remember. He seemed to
think I would do it on my own."

The bells back in the corridors of
Avery Fisher Hall were ringing to indicate it
was time for the audience to return to
their seats.

"So how'd you feel when you got out
there for the real thing?"

"Glossy," I said. "The stick in my
hand felt curiously foreign. It had an un-
comfortable little knob at the end. But
foremost in my mind was the question of
whether I could write like a robot with-
out attracting a lot of attention."

I described what happened backstage
during my performance. Acherson had
watched from the wings, and a friend of
mine had stood next to him. He said that
Acherson kept taking sips, nervous sips
from a can of Sprite, and at one point,
midway through the performance, he
suddenly gave a small groan and crushed
the soft drink can in his grip. The crinkle
of light metal made quite a noise. Stage
hands looked over. Acherson seemed so
upset that my friend tried to calm him
down. He pointed out that the concert
was for a good cause—public television—and
one shouldn't be too hard on the
audience who came to town to try to
help. Acherson whispered sharply to his
cat, "Well, Jack the Ripper was a charity
ty, but they didn't give him the London
Symphony to conduct!"

My friend laughed. "I'm falling in
love with him. Did he ask you when
you came off the stage?"

I told her I suspected it was in the
back of his mind. "He took the stick," I
said, "like we were in a relay race.
Rushed back out to see if his orchestra
was all right."

She wanted to know what others
had thought of my conducting.

"My attempts to write! Well, some-
one said he'd never seen a conductor
move on the podium quite as I had. He
described it as a sort of shimmy. Someone
else said it looked as if I were being bodi-
cued by an insect inside my clothing."

"The audience's lights dimmed, and
my friend leaned across. 'These days do
you still conflict with the Venus num-
ber two?'"

"I think that I've gotten it out of my
system," I said. ■



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: STANLEY BING

Way Too Sober



THE OTHER DAY I broke some very hard and crusty bread with a consultant I've known for more than a decade. We sat down at the appointed hour. The waiter told us the specials, which, as always, involved some form of arcane fungal matter in a Dijon vinaigrette. Then we ordered beverages. Now, back when life was good and investment capital was not a fictional concept, this lady and I would get soft and loopy at the slightest opportunity, and between gags, gossip, and the occasional olive, forge new outposts in the wilderness of market research. Today, things are different, of course. "What kind of sparkling water do you have?" she inquired and was then regaled with a list that would have made Rumsfeld perk up his helmet. She selected one. "Is that very bubbly?" she asked. "Very, milady," the waiter replied. "I'll have an... loud one," I said, feeling unusually and all of a sudden. The drinks came. We sipped them. Mine was tall and brown with lots of ice. There was lemon in it. When I was done, I had another. At exactly 1:45, we stood up to go. It was a fine lunch. For some reason, not one piece of business got done, but that's to be expected. This is the '90s. We're not here to do business. We're here to be sober.

The new sobriety was a fresh and innovative notion about the time that Michael Milken got his first subpoena, but nobody really believed it would take hold. Now it's an established fact of business life. And a good thing, too. With so much suffering going on, it's pretty clear that we who survive must adhere business friskily in all its forms. Business is a deeply serious activity, after all. Who knows it should be no less grave.

And so, we are.

The day after, I flew down to New Orleans for my industry's big convention. I knew my commitment to sobriety would be sorely tested. Conventions are always an opportunity for stupid excess, and, as you know, both stupidity and excess are deeply cherished.

I started drinking on the plane. Diet Cokes, that's all. It isn't easy to be mature in this setting; being airborne with that little cart rolling down the aisle is like being in summer camp and finding yourself alone in the center. The freezer is filled with Milky Ways. Sure, you could ignore them. But why? Before you know it, you're lying in the corner with a stomach the size of a medicine ball, wheezing under the weight of your own gluttony. Invert that in a couple of hours you're going to be called upon to take a swim test. Time and again I've hurt myself in this fashion. But not anymore.

The drinks are on me. And I mean that literally.

I had serious work to do! I landed, checked in, and headed over to the convention center.

There I found people drooling over the generous complimentary beverage dispensers that were provided for our pleasure. Nobody, however, was drinking. And for some reason nobody seemed to be doing very much business either.

We had a company after that right at a fine restaurant not far from my hotel. I wanted to find things already soaked up. Although not one person looked anything but sober, I did notice that everyone had a glass of something in their paws. For show, I concluded. "An inordinately tiny vodka," I said. It went down pretty well. So I had another tiny one. After a while, things broke to a crescendo of sweet, prehensible blather. People were starting to have fun—but



was the absolute last part of that. Not at all—we just had each other.

I was seriously not drunk at any way, but about an hour into the dinner I realized that I couldn't tell whether it was cheap or chicken on my plate. I was seated opposite somebody from Los Angeles who was into

This new austerity was killing me. "I'll have a gin martini straight up," I said.

provided with rumors, you know, but at my table, I saw several people deliberating over each other in the kind of rooms of friendship that I thought went out with

repudiation. "Put some water in that vodka," I told the waiter. I think it was the waiter, although it could have been the vice-president of finance.

At midnight I found myself outside the restaurant with the chairman, two journalists, three vice-presidents, and a couple odd managers. We got into a limo, a black-and-white limo as members you could have served it with eggs for breakfast. There were eight of us in there; I was sitting on a president's lap. He didn't seem to mind. "Move your leg, Bing," he said. There's all this time took as exactly one long blink and then stopped. "We're here," said the driver. "Where?" I said.

The place was dark and very crowded. "Vodka," I said. "This vodka is one so moist like you can barely see it." A very small woman started to run around in the limo several just behind my right eye nodding.

"This is nowhere," I said. "Where are we going?" said Duncan, Hurdley, Lennax, and Butler, who looked as solemn as I.

We were over to the Windsor Court, a hotel on the other side of Canal from the French Quarter, where things were happening. I spotted my pal Missouri seated on a low sofa with three attractive blond actresses in seductively classical French hair and seductively short skirts. They appeared to

be in the level of Donat's hell reserved for females condemned to sit with tedious guys with whom they will under no circumstances ever have sex, no matter how long surviving last. We passed them, settling into high-backed leather chairs, watching. A waitress came over.

"A very interesting vodka with a mixture of water in it," I said. "There were some there I ate an or seven handfuls. My mouth wasn't working very well, but no matter how bad things get I can always chew. In the center of the crowd, Roger King, king of King World, stood like a swimming chicken and a pack of swimming, backslapping bodgers, grinning and radiating extreme good feeling. His car and wheels for something under a I never felt more alone in my life.

"This place is nowhere," I suddenly heard myself say.

"I'm going to bed," said Butler. "Where are we going?" said Duncan, Hurdley, and Lennax. Where do you go at 1:00 in the morning when you're managing a community radio department? Answer: any place that isn't here.

The place we found was just across the street from our hotel, in the dark lanes of the Quarter. There were women there, moving up and down through the rooms, some in a shocking state of dishevelment. "This is horrible," said Lennax, looking out the door at a citywide angle.

The next thing I remember I was back at my hotel room. It was really just an I tried to turn on a television remote sitting near Washington, and though it is possible I did see it, I don't think so. "Thank God I didn't get loaded," I murmured as I slumped down into a dreamless sleep.

I awoke with the taste of dead eggs swirling through my system. I was sicker than I ever have been in my life, and that's saying a lot. I looked at the clock. It was 8:00 a.m. "This is your wake-up call," said the alarm at my ear. Why was I up at this hour? Because I had a meeting with my boss at 9 a.m., that's why. I've led a physically demanding life, but so far I have yet to win a business meeting. Now was no time to wait.

For the next hour, I massaged myself like a plump headed for prison status, walking around the bathroom as a cloud of superheated water, then plunging myself into a steady stream of cold. I felt blood, as if my body was entering so much blood it would displace an entire swimming pool. I turned the TV. I read *The Wall Street Journal*. I shaved,

then I drank water. "You were rather late tonight," I heard my voice tell myself. "So why aren't you rather late?" I knew why. I was not because I had not gotten drunk, not really, I had merely gotten as sudden as the flu, sick, and impossible to describe.

I got to the door of the president's suite at 9:30 sharp. "I've got coffee and juice and muffins," I said. "He looked great, fresh and lively and ready for a situation. 'Fine, Mike,' I said, 'but I'm not feeling altogether 100 percent this morning. I may not live.' With looked at me with tremendous kindness. 'Okay, Bing,' he said. 'Go down and take a load off.'

King told me nothing. I was very well except for one incident, when I suddenly attempted to down a bar of English muffins and saw the world invert and let its head, and I had an image of myself pulling a George Bush upstroke on my executive's leg. By the end of the morning I had attained a degree of sobriety possibly enjoyed only by those awaiting imminent execution by firing squad. All I wanted was to go home, have a long quiet drink and walk around my house, gazing and basking in my better hours. This new anxiety was killing me.

I caught the next plane out. I drank orange juice. This was a lie cry from the time just a couple of years ago when I flew back from Los Angeles with my buddy Gould. We were through an entire bottle of Diet. We got a lot done, too. We programmed our Camcorders. It was fun but currently irrelevant. Those days are over. And you know what? I don't miss them.

At 11:00, then, I have just returned from lunch with seven other high guys from our headquarters team. Before we all dug in, to our plates of pale, starchy, but deliciously correct fish, the waiter came and took our drink orders. "I guess I'll have a light beer," said each guy in turn, down the line.

My gorge rose up within me. Enough was enough. "Who were you, each of us trying to look as subtle as wine and family packed?"

"I'll have a gin martini straight up with about four of those big, ruby olives," I said. "Oh, Bing," did my nose up from the suddenly jolly group.

I guess that's when I made up my mind. From here on in, no matter what kind of toll it takes, how tough it is on me as a physical being, I refuse to get with the program. You can just see if you like. Somebody's got to lead the pack into the next big thing.

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Esquire

A Hustler Hustles

That's What He Does

BY RICHARD PRICE

In order to survive, Strike went by three unbreakable rules. One: Trust no one. Two: Don't get greedy. Three: Never do product

STRIKE SPOTTED HER: BABY FACE, BABY RACE, Siobhán of Sharnice, fourteen years old maybe, standing there with that gassy smile, trying to work up the nerve. He looked away, seeing her two months from now, no more baby fat, stinky, just another pipehead. Her undisguised hunger ~~ruined his stomach~~, but it was a bad day, on his stomach all a week, ~~seeing with the dream about his mother last night~~, with her standing in the window looking at him, pulling the shades up and down, trying to signal him about something, then on to this morning, being made to wait for an hour in the municipal building before anyone

STRIKE KLENCHED HIS TEETH SO THE PORCELAIN SQUEAK WAS A HUNDRED TIMES MAGNIFIED IN HIS HEAD, THINKING: LOSE ALL THE IDIOTS AROUND ME.

Patton smiled, looking the better of the Games than he. "So? Puzon needs all the time. What's your problem, man?" Strike stayed silent, glowering over at Puzon doing his grocery haul. "I often see matches to make, two hundred forty-eight to eleven, you know that?"

"Then there, Thompson," Big Chief murmured in the garage as now like a heavy loss. "Strike's got rights."

"I never said that," Strike protested, looking as soon as he opened his mouth. "It's."

"You're didn't matter, that was very good," Thompson put out his hand, forcing Strike to shake it. "Now say, the little words by the window."

Strike's mouth turned red, pulsing. Thompson held his hand, waiting.

Big Chief yawned, going up on steps, then grabbed a bunch of Games from Puzon's bag, chewing them open-mouthed and then belting nothing but his pants in Puzon's pocket, feeling around as his eyes lay his leg.

"Told, Big Chief, said, said, some, getting worse now," Puzon said. He offered the Games from Puzon's bag. A drink, please, to Strike's eye, but at least Thompson is going to Strike's hand to take some candy.

"Ya, Big Chief," Puzon said, signing again. "What you didn't back here anymore? You said if I won Thompson, you have all on me as a mouth."

"You have not to trust the police," Big Chief granted. "What's wrong with you?"

"Get down a, isn't that right? Man, I don't even get out of here, you I was like legs," Puzon was talking to Strike now, as if Strike hadn't been there. "Thompson was like, bad-bad-bad, Man, he was better, as bad I thought he was gonna down me at where you. You all think you think, you so much, make so much," Puzon seemed all their better on his fingers, making a face.

"See, the problem is, I don't like to run," Thompson finished with. "No have been some time we get into an elevator, push buttons, and here at a one-on-one" Strike could almost smell the soap coming off Thompson's nose, behind the girls. "Cause I like to run."

"That's I got my whole career style as you?" Old-fashioned to Thompson's hair, Puzon was up on one leg, when high over his head like the Keweenaw did, looking out the back, switching legs, going to come off Strike and behind. "You be happy to go off by them, break."

The Word came out of a Wednesday too soon. Big Chief saw the St. Louis Cardinals hat and went after him with a little bubble, reaching him up against the fence, a leg bent on his back. "What's up, Ya?" Big Chief glared at the full of night, then, and then out of the Word's pocket.

The Word seemed as white. "I don't agree to see, Big Chief! It's the man mother's brother, I mean."

All the ladies looked in despair, "Mother's Day? Mother's Day?" Everybody having a good laugh as Big Chief seemed the Word to be so.

"Puzon, Big Chief," my mother, I mean."

Strike forgot about Thompson for a second, drinking. What's that meant about him looking all the money? Was he stealing? We'll see us up! Strike just was gone in distress, made profit over coffee like a godmother. Strike never in himself? It's doesn't say up, I'm stepping out. I can't take it as more.

The bounty ran over for now, two of the ladies walked back through the project toward the second hidden car.

Thompson came back in his face. "Strike, why you always look depressed? Are you depressed? Are you angry at me?" Thompson looked concerned, waiting for an answer.

"You guess so when you guess do," Strike controlled himself, the words coming out low and lazy.

"That's let me ask you something else. Do you think I'm an effective person in the way on drugs?" Strike stared Strike in the eye, mouth open, nervous, and nervous. Strike turned his head away, but Thompson moved his own head to keep up the eye contact. "Or do you think I'm just a big idiot?"

Strike might think looking at him again, found definitely out of words. The Word out, too.

"Oh, the," Strike mumbled his fingers. "That we do each and about."

Strike looked through his nose and leached over to salute Thompson said, "Allow me," then dropped to one knee as if they were at a show scene, watching Strike's ankles and then slipping off his socks.

"Let's go, there, Thompson," Big Chief pulled from the car. Thompson righted, rising, shaking out the socks for hidden days. "Okay, I guess go, here," Thompson avoided on his legs like a direct answer. Strike moved, knowing himself for the goodie. Thompson wanted to, dipping Strike to between the shoulder blades, a heavy, later-coming kick, sending a shock wave of pain through Strike's eye point down. "Catch you later."

Thompson walked over to a group of little kids who were wandering in the crowd, dropped his head on a sixteen-year-old shoulder. "What are, Big Time." He walked to the car with the kid at ninety against a movie theater on a window, Strike's socks dangling from his back pocket.

Strike pulled on his trousers over his feet, checking his teeth as the porcelain squeak was a hundred times magnified in his head, shaking him all the while around one. Clavus, clavus, provided.

Strike walked to the curb and looked into the Ferry. The Word sat in the back. Strike tried to catch his eye, drew some fear that the Word was seeing on the street and wouldn't look his way. Crunch on on the marble, close on the window, waiting to pop. Little kids hang all over the car, with-why, Big Chief walked to one leg and growled. "What's up, Ya? Thompson?"

As the Ferry rolled off, Big Chief met goodbye to Strike by making a gas with his fingers and winking, his arms as they were gone, the non-verbal. Gaby came rolling up again, Raskley as the wheel with his one thing on the back of the dragons arm. Raskley dashed his head down as he over the gold frame of his sunglasses, then curled a finger for Strike.

Strike looked right and left, frowning, not liking to be seen talking to Raskley out in the open, even though my kid in the street could show a dagger. Clavus on top, then down to Raskley, then down to Strike, and finally down to whomsoever Strike was meeting this week.

Strike walked to the car, made his head as the passenger-side window, and got his head a heavy cherry smell coming from the door. Raskley had in front and back. The Garfield car was custom cupped and spread open on all the rear and side windows, even the top-back-out at the traffic.

Strike sat with a hand on his cheek. Zodiac and Apple XII posters appeared from the depths of his day-dreamed jacket, and a button was missing from the belly of his white little pointed shirt. But he was handsome, mouth-stained, and in pretty good shape from all the prison work and from being an ex-convict.

"What'd they do?" Raskley climbed his place up the bridge of his nose.

"The Word went," Strike was annoyed to hear the car move back on its. "The Word's looking or nothing."

"You gotta go all his name to get 'him' Raskley spoke in surprise, like a child-savior.

"I take over it." Maybe Raskley should take out of some things too. Strike thought, like losing the Garfield, And how? The Candy wheel he was at Raskley only managed to get left in contact to make a big body Catholic.

"What you want?" Strike mumbled, poking up a vague first-hand and underhand the cherry nose.

"You go to that house yet?" Another dipping sag.

"I can't, I had more."

"That'll kill you quicker than anything on here," Raskley held his chin at the New How.

"What you want, Raskley?" Strike tried to come off patient, but barely, wanting to get back on the bench and escape the porcelain situation.

"Come by the store."

Strike's long fingernails were shiny and gray with food grease. Strike's got rippled reflexively.

"What?"

"I mean he says."

Raskley shrugged. "Let them run it."

"Puzon's a idiot," Strike looked away, unwilling, not wanting to see those fingernails anymore.

Raskley righted, shook his head. "You got to get off that bench every now and then, my man. You gotta get off that bench up."

Strike couldn't respond, the summer having strong, right up from his face. And he didn't even know the words yet.

"But come by, okay?"

"I'll call."

The day he got worked her way up to Raskley's window in a sky-blue, she pushed in, smiling. "Little blue Garfield."

Raskley gave her a slow eye and forced his knees. "What you want?"

Strike pushed away from the car, landed back in the bench. Then my stomach.

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STRIKE WAS NO DIFFERENT BY NOW, HOOKED ON THE DOPE OF RECOGNITION, OF ADORATION. AND STRIKE WAS JUST GETTING STARTED.

were all more grateful like Rodney looked on a lifetime of feeling, of making it the outdoor way, hooked on their status as street stars. It was just like Strike's mother said when they'd had those big fights. "How much is enough? How much money do you have to make to raise? Who do you think you're hooking with that someone, me or yourself?"

As Rodney rolled JNK, Strike compared up his mother's face when she spoke those words now again she sat on his mouth, the unblinking conviction in her eyes. She had been so sure of her knowledge of him that she had a cross marked her name. Well, now he knew that she was right, knew that he was probably no different from Rodney by now, hooked on the dope of recognition, of adoration. And Strike was just getting started.

THEY WERE ASKING a roadside strip of 17, one side of the road lined with cigar outlets, waterfront showrooms, and Chinese restaurants, the other by a dark park bordered by a low stone wall. Strike saw the towers of the Eiffel Tower about a mile ahead, but long before they got there Rodney slowed down, coming to a full stop on the park side of the road. Strike saw three horses sitting in the shadows on top of the stone wall and leaning on a Spanish saddle on a horse box.

"Leave the money in the car," Rodney grunted out of the car. Strike did as he was told, then slipped onto the sidewalk, listening, waiting, and reported, an involuntary party to a two-vehicle situation in a neighborhood along a public highway. He didn't know what was happening but would have felt better about it if somebody was talking.

The horses did off the wall, and the biggest one clapped hands with Rodney, Rodney shouting, "Pop, my son Pop!" No one looked at Strike, not Pop or the other two, both of them wearing jackets in the warm weather to warm their pants.

"Where you been, brother? I begged you like three times!" Pop giggled and danced nervously from foot to foot as if he had to pee. He was larger—no there, up pounds—wearing an orange Milwaukee Brewers T-shirt over baggy khaki pants. He had calico eyes, a mustache on his chin, the outer toes of his feet. "I figure you was Rodney's cousin like some heavy business. Your keeper fucked up, man! I figure maybe you don't recognize the number cause I was calling from a pay phone."

"Yeah, I know it was you!" Rodney's voice was a high ringing. "Against I don't know a number coming in, I know it's Pop."

Pop exploded into giggles again, tossing his head like a horse. "Rodney fucked Rodney man."

Strike saw umbrellas and greater signs in the shadows over the park wall. He looked back at the horses, sat, and the New York plates made him ask to his stomach. Rodney was getting into some thing here that might be way out of bounds.

"Cause we want! Like a hour here," Pop said, grunting. "I got fucked people stacked up like airplanes, you know? So what was it, like you didn't hear it when the number came in? How like looked down at a lane?" Pop smiled, waiting for an explanation.

Strike moved one of the horses sideways. He was a slender, light-brown mare, smaller than Strike. A black watch cap pulled down over his face made his black eyes enormous. The boy looked away, up a point of view into the cemetery over the wall.

Rodney gave Pop a backhanded swear. "Now, man, I heard it. I heard it every time. Is what you said, I was taken out of business."

Pop looked dreamily at Rodney for a beat, as if wondering where to take it. He slowly reached behind him, above his head, and Strike's

stomach shot a red stream, gas.

But Pop only came up with a keeper that had been clipped to his belt. He pushed it button and it began to vibrate. Pop held it out to his palm to Rodney.

Rodney took it, turning it this way and that. "God damn, man, what the fuck?"

Strike saw the black-eyed gas boy disappear around the corner side of the van.

"Remember you didn't want the keeper more, that keeper, you know?" Pop laughed.

"God damn, I wish that up some fuckin' pump! She can take a message and get off at the same time, ain't that something?"

The boy repeated the group holding something between his side and his elbow but out of sight under his palm. Pop was looking at Rodney's stomach, wondering as if he was just shot. The actors seemed not to understand English. Rodney handed the vibrating pager to Strike. Strike made a fast pass at looking straight but then didn't know who to give it to. The thing had a powerful, sensitive pulse that made a sense alive.

Suddenly the two gas boys became casually close, turning at the same time and leaning back to look down the dark sidewalk at a long figure emerging from the shadows and walking toward the group, about a hundred yards off. Pop turned back, too, and his wet laughter subsided into a gasp, then just a heavy snore. Rodney watched at Strike, Strike shaking his head, now what? But as the figure came closer—several bright shoulders hunched as if he was cold, riding small colorful steps—Strike saw who it was. Fervid flames. Somebody made him see at the same time, became relaxed again, but Pop's jittery behavior was repeated by a other side. Strike watched Fervid drive over. He was thirty-five but looked fifty, fat with close-cropped gray hair and beard. His face was deeply furrowed, like a chin with black plowed lines through clay across his forehead and down his cheeks. His mouth was a fine line, and his eyes were both furrowed and black. He looked as if he had never missed a full season of conversation in his life.

When Fervid was still a few yards from the group, Rodney raised both hands overhead as if someone had said "Strike 'em up."

"Pop!" Rodney bellowed, barely high, his head in the van. "Vibe on Dan."

"No over!" Pop shouted, then turned to Strike. "My friend... He smiled especially, an open mouth.

Strike watched Fervid but didn't think that was what the guy was driving at. It took a moment before he realized that Pop was asking for his keeper back.

Strike and Rodney pulled away from the curb just as Fervid reached the group. Looking back, Strike could tell that Pop had a completely different manner with Rodney gone and Fervid there.

"What you into here?" Strike asked. "What was that?"

"What was what?" Rodney said, saying with him, his mouth pushed with recent amusements.

"I didn't like that," Strike pointedly looked out his side window. "I didn't like that," Rodney laughed. "Just just and you that know when that was, so how you know you that like it?"

The glowing towers of the Eiffel Tower were coming up at the next light and Strike turned himself for the turn. "Just get the horses over with and take me back to the beach."

For Rodney flew right by the program, then dived out of the side of his mouth. "Business is over work."

Indeed, Strike sat up, automatically feeling under the seat for the money. The Toys "R" Us bag was gone. ■



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Robert Altman

The *Player* TRASHES THE SMARMY, CRAVEN, EGO-CRAZED POWER BROKERS OF HOLLYWOOD, AND THE SMARMY, CRAVEN, EGO-CRAZED POWER BROKERS LOVE IT. *By Jack Kroll*

IS THAT A GREAM OF TITANIC in Robert Altman's eye? Is anyone the word for that small goatee? No! Someone is an old song for the director, but he hasn't felt quite buzzing enough in a long time. It would be strange if he didn't feel a buzz, along with a couple of other emotions. He's made a career—a real, American, directorial, non-TV career, and baby, it is hot. Within before this movie, *The Player* opened, it seemed as if every "player"—every studio executive in Hollywood—had seen it as was hyperemulating and he/she got to see it. An Altman movie that movie business wanted to see? And that reportedly they actually

Now, going about the New York office of his production company, Sundance 2, Altman is clearly fighting the impulse to gloat. "Suddenly I'm a viable commodity again," is how he puts it. Translated from the original Altmanese, this means: "I guess I showed the fuckers, right?" What he showed the fuckers is *disillusion*. *The Player*, about a studio executive who tells a writer and gets more work in, is an anti-ego, hilarious, deftly-acted, and, well, it's a picture of the movie business by a filmmaker who knows what a life is like on one's face in the hands of those power-mad, Nietzsche-skip, rats. And now the rats are coming with praise for Altman's withering discussion of their cupidity, rapacity, and hypocrisy. The rats are even sending him scripts again! Have they no shame?

Of course, what these bastards think is that *The Player* is about some other bastards. It would be fun to draw up a two-column chart in which movie executives identify what they think the main protagonists, Griffin Mill, "mildly" (as just page 46). The movie fan would be if the right-hand column had the same names as the left-hand one, but in different order. But Altman and Michael Tollin, who wrote the screenplay from his overly disconcerting novel, are too smart to have made the movie a game of who's who. "I didn't make the mistake of using subtle shots at these guys," says Altman.

"This isn't Altman's *Revenge*. That would be too personal, too loaded. Everyone at *The Player* is in trouble as it is someone that I've observed. All that story before is in mine as well as theirs. People say, 'Oh, you're meant to be funny, you're a maverick.' I don't feel that way at all. But if people see me that way, I play that part. And if I play that part long enough, that's who I am. I say, 'Well, fuck 'em, that's what I'm gonna do.'"

Altman's refusal to adopt a lofty moral position is both prosaic and canny. He's not saying that he is made of the same tainted protoplasm as the executives, but that if he wants to get anything

This page Tim Robbins as Griffin Mill. Facing page Robert Altman. The movie people have misread—it isn't—how withering the movie really is.



rejoice? This came with the meltdown of the Soviet Union as an event that was off the books at Las Vegas.

No director has banged heads with the Hollywood system as hard or as often as Altman. In his dusty-five-year career he's made the irreproachable (*MASH*, *Nashville*, *McGee and Mrs. Miller*) and the biodegradable (*Damage*, *A Perfect Couple*, *Quincy*). For some years he has been in a kind of working exile from the movie mainstream, making films for TV like *The Come Morning*, *Over the Mountain*, and HBO's *Tanner '88* series. Even when he turns out at extraordinary expense, like *Preserve the Thin Red Line* in Europe in 1990, the mainstream bustles on, uncaring.

Gives Something Back





ness, he's got to play this game. And to win you'd better outmaneuver the enemy. The enemy, in fact, is what Altman has always called the system managers who've been driving him up the wall.

At the moment, Altman is atoning it on Mark Canton, the chairman of Columbia Pictures. When he was still looking for a distributor, Altman submitted a private screening of *The Player* for Canton, then, surprised the screening when he learned that Canton objected to the presence of Altman's name in the program booth and managers didn't watch the whole movie but wanted to drop it on the last reel. As the story was reported, Altman fumed at Canton, calling him a jerk. Canton fired back, insisting that he never asked to skip to the movie's final reel and calling Altman "a comically bulky." The candid talk was shocking to Hollywooded people who live by the Mafia rule that you never, ever, bad-mouth another Hollywood person in public. Off the record, senior company, of course, no day. But Altman never so much as mention Canton in the rudeness of everything he finds in wrong with the movie business. "I called him a jerk. Fuck it, that's the way I feel. Are we all supposed to keep quiet to protect our industry because that's a given? Let him stop behaving like a jerk."

The *Player* DOES NOT AGREE with a system. There's a widespread feeling among critics and in the industry that the quality of American movies is in free fall. But the industry is deeper. In Hollywood, as in shows doing an *Asperger* dance with money, and today it's increasingly clear that many movie companies are not very good at making other. Orion is bankrupt, Carolco is in near-terminal decay, low-office businesses like *Snipes* of the Warner. In Cannes, people arrive and depart in late seasons, and movies that gross more than ten million flop because they cost nearly ten million.

Altman says, "The *Exorcism* in that studio. It's not even dollars they're able to do to get to see who's ahead. It's not that bad guys are in charge. Nobody is in charge." As Altman sees it, the movie business has been hoarding him from the beginning. He observes on the move in 1975 when with Century Fox almost killed *MVSP*, the only one of his three films that was a huge box office success. "Fox had a smug presence in a big San Francisco theater with twelve hundred seats," says Altman. "The audience was talking quietly. But the media was discussing the audience members' cards to make them look bad. Why? Because it wasn't their picture, it was something they didn't want. For it to be successful proved them wrong."

Richard Zanuck, then head of Fox, was there that night only because, says Altman, there was a big football game scheduled in the Bay area. "I grabbed him by the lapels and said, 'You have to pay attention to this one success!' Had Zanuck not been down there right, *MVSP* might have been banned. I always say that *MVSP* wasn't released, it was paid."

Altman continues that *MVSP* had made more money for 19th Century Fox than any movie has ever made for any company

Altman (left) comically claims he is no better than the rest of the set pack.

"Well over a billion, when you do more in twelve years of TV and the fact that it's still going on I made my own on *MVSP* period. I was never contacted on the TV since. I never got a penny."

Altman says he "needed a lot about being" from his father, a Kansas City insurance man and a dedicated gambler. And yet he has been lucky at times, he was unscathed while flying money bonking millions in the Jewish Pavilion during World War II. He sold most, but only for a week, and later went back to making dogs for identification. Altman was no movie boss or film-school grad, he worked for an industrial film company as an editor and director. As a TV director he made countless episodes for series like *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Gunboat*, *Lawman*, and *The Day*, for which he directed a notorious episode with pop star Fabian in a porno letter. The show drew the wrath of Censors for an obscene last reel. Television producers frequently fired him after he screwed up their shows with outrageous late-copying dialogue, for which he later became famous.

Altman was a director and a teacher, but his own way who had the heart of an athlete. On *MVSP*, he won Ellen Gould and Donald Sutherland in a first fight with Altman because he gave them

PLAYER PARLOR GAME NUMBER ONE

Who is the real life Griffin Mill?

People in the Hollywood community are speaking quickly about who inspired which character in *The Player*. Mostly they agree to know who *Player* Altman and commercial filmmaker Griffin Mill is a lawyer in the marketplace made money playing *Ten* before *Open* shows to get his career on *Warner Brothers* to produce *Mill* before *Columbia Pictures* and president Barry Josephson, and *Columbia* chairman Mark Canton. He said he had seen various presidents, agents, attorneys, and lawyers in some names. Out of a class of "No comments" after *Player* merged.

Tom Felleury, chairman, Universal Pictures, "I think he's like everybody. It's not appropriate for me to speculate on exactly whom the character was modeled."

Gregg Gersh, producer "Griffin is the prototype of all the boys who learned to drive in Hollywood and always wear black and know how to drive a Mercedes, and our view is a T-shirt under their armholes, and who maintain that phone line for their personal status. So I would say everyone you've heard of it is, it is with the exception of Barry Josephson. He's a real person."

Robert J. Steinberg, senior vice-president, Columbia Pictures, "It's definitely not me. I've only been a studio executive for four months

justified. Talcott wrote that book in '68. Of course, the director probably gave it his own spin, too, but I can't think of anyone who it would be. What should I do, should I have done?"

Mark Mitelman, chairman, The Star Pictures, "Taking up a question about this is harder than beating the head of a wedge."



Griffin is still a real-life player, but not a real-life one.

Michael Tinsman, vice-president, The Player "The funny thing about all the speculation that it's Mark Canton is that I'd only had a couple of meetings with him and they were both good. One part of the character might be based on him—I was at a meeting with him and I was packing him a bad movie into the thought occurred to me. Of course, he's been known to tell all his

too much freedom. "I like actors to be loose, to have fun," says Altman. "The watching shows people interact and the helping something goes wrong. There's always that error, that mistake—the 'the game.' Gould eventually got the idea at *MVSP* and even more in the city. The way Griffin, in which Altman and Gould named Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe into an insurance, inefficient dick."

What Altman wants adds up to now is a one-man deconstruction of practically every grotesque myth in American movies: the war film, the juvenile-espionage film, the western, the gangster epic, the musical. And now with *The Player* he's demanding what's left of the myth of Hollywood itself.

ALTHOUGH MANY OF THE STUDIO PEOPLE who've seen the film say they're surprised (meaning relieved) that it's not more savage, they do maintain the movie is tame. Nothing is more savage than the kind of laughter generated by Alman's wit. Alman throws his whole package at you and only at the loudest appropriate moments, not with as much as in which the camera rounds a studio parking lot, passing through office windows, rising and falling, ending and spying. Alman's ubiquitous soundtrack picks up fragments of conversation that devolve into the film's leading motif, the Puck, that nerve-shattering read in which a desperate writer or director has to sell an executive on a story idea with less forward speed.

Those patches have all the Hollywood studios in stitches. One is a story about a TV star who goes to Africa and is worshipped by a tribe of tribal people. "It's Out of Africa meets Perry White," declares the studio. "Does anybody want you?" A writer asks an exec. "Tribal doesn't scare me," answers the exec. "Tribal people scare me." Don't worry, says the writer, his story is "a populist political-thriller comedy with a heart—Glen means Marlon and Graham."

PLAYER PARLOR GAME NUMBER TWO



Leslie Hall presides at high concept lunch hour.

WHOSE GAME IS THAT? In the telephone rooming house Colleen Miller Alman never reveals the identity of the blacklisting screenwriter as many people who've seen the film have become obsessed with figuring out whose discredited voice it is. Christopher Columbus at 14? Helga Gailby Brown, wife of ex-president David, grows "I pointed him to all out for days and he readily refused." Tim Robbins dates some other and he sees a screening. "It turned out that the voice was of a very good friend of mine." One line, the screenwriter character appears briefly in the film. Alman has, like most, the one played by Jack Henry. The answer on next month's letters page.

The *Player* is a comedy of misapprehension involving an Griffin Mill (Tim Robbins), a young studio executive whose steady rise is about to become a fall in a new fashion. Larry Levy (Peter Gallagher), comes into the studio. Griffin is also being pursued by his nervous, a temperamental writer whose work he has snatched and who's been sending him threatening postcards with messages like "In the name of all writers I'm going to kill you!" With his job and his life being threatened, Griffin switches on a dial that leads to sex, violence, death, betrayal, and other perquisites of the Hollywood fast track.

Tim Robbins researched his part by hanging out with movie executives, whom he divides astoundingly into good guys and assholes. "The stereotype of blockbusters is wrong," he says. "It's not the individual, it's the system. By the time you can single-handedly green-light a project, you're made so many connections, modeled your head in many times against your will, that you don't have the quiet left to give the go-ahead for something original or innovative."

The movie is a marvel of tone control, with Alman balancing the elements of satire, suspense, and spoof. He's lucky he got a chance to make it. The project began when coproducer David Brown bought the novel and sold Cary Beckman of *Amateur Entertainment* on the idea. The movie was first offered to director Sidney Lumet, at one point, Chevy Chase was slated to star. But when Lumet decided he couldn't make the picture for as much as, he dropped out and the producers came to Alman. Not surprisingly, the movie is being distributed outside the studio system.

As usual, Alman asked for control of the project. This meant that Tollin's script would now become what Alman calls a blueprint rather than something to be followed in every detail. The director's first suggestion was to get Hollywood to come in collaborating in addition to his leading players—Robbins, Gallagher, Gervais, Smith as the screenwriter's girl, Fred Ward as the cynical chief of studio money, and Kevin James as the studio chief—the movie features easy-for some celebrities as themselves, including Nick Nolte, Jack Lemmon, Clint, Auden, Harris, Dan Aykroyd, Susan Sarandon, Lily Tomlin, Scott Glenn, Jeff Goldblum, Madsen, Madsen, Andre MacDowell, and Matt Fingers.

Alman's biggest coup was convincing Bruce Willis and Julia Roberts to jumpstart themselves in some of the film's crucial scenes. "I thought there was a fifty-fifty chance Julia would show up," he says. "She was showing that. I just only a week after her canceled wedding. The press was after her, they were emotionally destroyed. She had to poke fun at herself. She would have been perfectly justified not to show up. But she showed up and she did it. She was very gutsy. She tells people it was the best picture she did last year."

"Did that film have anything, all these stars would have said, 'Gosh, why did I do that?'" says Alman. "But now it's considered cool to have been in the movie. Many people turned me down, and I don't blame them. Warren Beatty said, 'Why didn't you call me? Why wasn't I in this movie?' We went on the phone to him several times. He was supposed to show up one day."

In working Hollywood, Alman took tabloidish delight in co-opting some of the most important overwinding conversations. His treatment of sex is a typically glib example. The movie's two major female characters are the suspenseful Gina Senaldi and the lovable Cynthia Stevenson. "Gina is when her clothes off in every movie, that's her reputation. I said, 'Lana, I've got you naked but it's not gonna be you.' Then I told Cynthia, 'Before you do this movie I gotta tell you that you have to take your shirt off.' She said, 'Nobody's ever asked me to.' I said, 'I have to show me or I can't make this movie. But I don't want to show them where I'm exposed so, I want to show them early in the picture and not again.' She said, 'Well, I'm very comfortable with my body. I'll do it.'"

In the scene, Stevenson and Robbins are in his hot tub at the studio about a ridiculously raunchy sex scene from a movie script. "Tim Newman has the best line about *The Player*," says Alman. "He says, 'It's a movie about how you don't get to see the tits of the girl whose sex you want to see, and you do get to see the tits of the girl whose sex you don't want to see.'"

Another example of Alman's unique method is a scene in the timeless police station. Two solitary detectives, played by Whoopi Goldberg and mystery-writers singer Lily Tomlin, snarl Robbins while Whoopi reads a stamp in his face and Tomlin reads his under his coat. The only thing in the script was a standard interrogation scene that, Alman said, you could see on TV any night. Alman's idea was that the scene had to turn into a comic nightmare. So, as he usually does, he asked everyone in the scene to come up with an idea, and they did—Whoopi the impersonator, Tomlin the *Bye-bye* Alman the director's nightmare laughter.

Now that *The Player* has, comically enough, become an officially sanctioned triumph even before its opening, Alman figures he will have leverage he hasn't had for years. "Look, those three months," he grins. "I believe I'll have to go to work again." He's juggling several projects, but the movie he's wanted to do for several years, *L.A. Street-Clut*, based on stories by Raymond Carver, looks no silly

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for the studios to snap up. So what else is new? "I don't have to know to know these guys," says Altman. "It's not arrogant. Well, it is arrogant, but it's true. I don't know them, but I know money to keep me. I'll still guess he's making films when they're out looking for jobs." Warning to his friends, Altman seems dead. "I don't say guys like [Mach] Gerson are evil personified. They're stupid personified. They have power to destroy and inhibit progress. They don't let the great creep through. They're trying to freeze what would last more rather than lead the market, which is what they should do: they're going into a computer and the computer has the wrong information. But nobody has hunches anymore. Jack Warner, Harry Cohn and these terrible guys, they had hunches. They said, 'This film might be an enormous box office problem.'"

If you call *The Player* a screed for Altman, he faces up like a bear hooded by film. "I've gone through this comeback doing a lot. *Nashville* was supposed to be a comeback. In *agony*, once wrote an article about failure in the past and how there I was the main husband. McCabe was a commercial failure. This picture hasn't grossed a million dollars, but it's been on every list of the best pictures of

anybody would say. It's your bookie calling. I could stand at a crap table for two days. The feeling is like this. Computers gamble but so do humans. It's not everybody. Well, I think there I got embarrassed that maybe I was becoming a compulsive gambler. That's what Cal Fendley was all about. When I was making *Tenno* in 1976, I lost every game on every day of the baseball season. I mean I lost by an average of a million dollars. It was like I got into a random blind with computers and I thought, 'The bleeding musters.'"

Altman's voice softens as he curls his nose back into his own life. "I've never really been truly. Mostly I've been wanting to keep up. When I was making technical films in Kansas City I lived on a lake thirty-five miles outside the city. There were no buses and for two years I didn't own a car. I learned to ride. I was always behind the eight ball. But I got used to living that way." His experience with *MPV* seemed Altman to realize he was never going to reap wild riches in the movie business. His deal on *The Player*, he says, is a salary of six figures and "a certain profit participation." That's not bad, but he's not accepting any bonuses. "I doubt if I see a penny from profits on *The Player*," he says.

It's truly using Altman's film as progenitor of his own personality, but the suspension is strong with *Love Me or Leave Me*, the 1955 movie based on a play by Donald Freed and Arnold M. Stone that Altman made with approval of his own money. The film has one character Richard Nixon, a bloodcurdling performance by Philip Baker Hall. A kind of "Nixon's Last Tape," the film shows the ex-President reciting an apology for his crime life and career. It's hard to see the liberal Altman making any sort of identification with Nixon, but the movie's message that had never fully accepted his terms is remarkable as an emotional analysis of Altman's relationship with the recent establishment in the movie's ending, with the actors spinning and Nixon shouting "Fuck 'em! Fuck 'em! Fuck 'em!" It's all too easy to hear the director's voice in applied capacity with his subject.

But in his own person, Altman naturally accepts his status as an outsider in the system. "Just the word *outsider* means that there's an order to things," he says. "And the order of things does not include the things that I do. I get passed off, I have less of respect. But I have as much as it is no sense of reality, and as sense of reality I don't have a grip." As to the future, "I say I've got about fifteen years—maybe I'm giving myself the benefit of the doubt. But in my old life I think of myself as thirty. I am myself on TV and I'm shocked at who that old man is. Some girl comes into the room and I get a message. I do a first thing and I suddenly realize what she's looking at. I do find a little bit about it. Those things will mean so much to me."

In this elegant mood, Altman says it wouldn't really matter if all his films, all of everybody's films, were to disappear. This is the old American embarrassment about art, the impulse that makes our artists want to be forgotten and forgotten. But then he bursts out and says that art is the only important thing there is. Look at a man from an Indian or Mexican. You see a sign walking through and he sees this fantastic visual thing. Does he go back and tell other things, like, I just saw a man that I think you eyes out! That's art. You got me what I saw? You got me that thought that I thought? You're one-on-one with each member of the audience. Because that information comes into your head, and it plays with all the other information you have in your head, it changes your dreams." ■

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THE IMPERISHABLE AND THE BIODEGRADABLE: Altman as director

1959 <i>Masters of Deceit</i>	1971 <i>Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean</i>	1974 <i>California Split</i>
1961 <i>Tenno</i> (with John Huston)	1972 <i>The Long Goodbye</i>	1975 <i>The Long Goodbye</i>
1962 <i>The Long Goodbye</i>	1973 <i>Jeopardy!</i>	1976 <i>Jeopardy!</i>
1963 <i>Jeopardy!</i>	1974 <i>Jeopardy!</i>	1977 <i>Jeopardy!</i>
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I
love

myself

and you hate me for it

THE RAGING RIFFS OF HOWARD STERN ARE SO FUNNY THEY MAKE US SCREAM

AT TIMES IT SEEMS POSSIBLE to divide the world into two types of people: creeps and assholes. Creeps are vague and tight and seldom say what they mean or mean what they say. Always busy plotting, strategizing, and working the angles, they know there's no such thing as paranoia, because everything you suspect might be happening actually is happening. And they make it happen. There's no noise, no candor, just the cool hum of reductive calculation. But from assholes you always know what to expect. Because they choose on transgression, their behavior becomes both fun and predictable. They'll never betray you because they never say anything behind your back that they haven't already said to your face. Every thought is deemed right enough to be spoken, every opinion real enough to be fact, every shit sweet enough to be bronzed.

All this brings us, naturally, to Howard Stern.

Stern is vintage blaring asshole (hello Howard, it's a compliment): a state-of-the-art, world-class rendition of the genre, increasingly famous for his willingness to say the wrong thing. And since those of us who tune in to his morning radio show are treated to myriad descriptions of his cellular-aided buttocks, I'd like to think of his assholism in both the physical and intellectual sense. His sharp, omnipresent brand of performance art, his unrelenting penchant for "truth"-telling, serves as a kind of keel—a lowering experience that cuts through the crap, through the inflated pronouncements of fame, through the inflated rhetoric of prominence. Jabbing at the grosser machinations of power and control, he succeeds as only a big-time control freak and power abuser can. Zigzagging between self-degradation and megadramatic, political diatribe and disgusting stereotyping, over-the-top and ridiculously humble indignation, he is both pitifully unsettling and crazily funny.

In fact, Stern's coupling of full-force rebuke with relaxed, conversational lowering has captured the market in New York morning radio, and it's only a matter of time before Los Angeles follows suit. And why not? He simply has no competition. For if radio in general is riddled in horrendously tedious playlets, doubly boring doctays, and treacherous older stations, then

morning talk radio is even less than zero. And that's not for any lack of trying. There's plenty of yapping going on in the hours before noon. But across the country the genre is motivated by a bunch of blind champs trying desperately to hook the listener with the same dumb formula. Never have so many worked so hard, so pathetically, to be "outrageous." I know, just a bunch of really wild-and-crazy, far-out, wacky kinds of guys who, for all their toil and trouble, for all their strenuously choreographed "antics," wind up sad, dull, and worse of all, uninteresting.

But Howard Stern makes it look easy. Truly enraptured by the sound of his own voice, he seems intent on bringing order to new highs (or lows), on reminding us of the troubling complexities, pleasures, and horrors that only a major asshole like himself can deliver. From a generalized fascination with bodily func-

tions (his obtuse belief in the intrusive powers of the word doody and his advice on bathroom etiquette, "You should always flush twice; I believe in a courtesy flush") to explicit sexual descriptions, from silly pontifications on current events ("How can Jeffrey Dahmer get a fair trial unless there are more guys who want to have sex with dead men on

the jury?") to increasingly jokey parodies of both friends and enemies, he takes us back to another place and time—junior high school. His inability to be a good boy, his blow-by-blow descriptions of his own masturbation, his constant complaining about his penis size ("I'm hanging like a penis"), all work to encourage both intense embarrassment and rollicking self-recognition in the heart, mind, and groin of his ideal listener: the boy based not too deeply in every struggle, white man, this boy who most keenly feels the exalting yet exhumating goose of Stern's glibity, empathetic devotion, who most profoundly yields to the hi, dude-ness of it all.

Given the velocity of this testosterone rush, you've got to appreciate the presence of sidewalk, resident wise women, and person of color Robin Quivers, whose giddy commentary on Stern's every tic, where, and how he serves as an anchor of sorts, bringing the real world into Howard's world by plugging him with juicy news items in the hope of detouring the viti-

Prick

Up Your Ears

By Barbara Kruger

two resort, of pushing the button that unleashes the raging mother of all riffs that can snuff the show for as many minutes as possible. Stern and his beloved posse of quasi-anachronists—Robin, Jackie “The Jokester” Marting, Gary “Baba Soco” Delf Abate, Fred Norris, and Scuzzing John McInerdez—seem to make up a kind of generic hometown that nudges bloated-eyed listeners into the day and raises the drive time.

Spitting out whatever crawls to the tip of his tongue, Stern drowns on about his inability to “bang” his wife, chases the tenth-rate show-biz schlockers who are perpetually ripping him off (so true), comes on weird to women (“My wife has been ginger. She told me to start dating”), and plays tapes of the pivotal moments that fill his universe: outrageously dumb sound bites of politicians, rock stars, and any other foolish loudmouths souped enough to speak their “minds.” One vintage segment is an airing of an ancient tape of a Stern family outing to Howard’s recording engineer for their studio, where Howard and his sister Ellen are quizzed on current events. Little Howard proceeds to drive his father crazy with his goofy, childish antics. Frustrated, Daddy releases a torrent of outbursts, bellowing, “Shut up, you moron!” In fact, it is this inherited effrontery, blurted in the same tone of voice, that fuels

STALKING THE PHANTOM, SIFTING THE

The Howard Stern

Interview

By Rebecca Johnson

DRY

FACTS WE MAY KNOW: His four-hour (or so) daily radio show fills the heads of roughly three million listeners in four cities, in two of which (New York and Philadelphia) he is the number-one rated program, and in two of which (Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.) he’s still flying. His syndicated interviews show him in fifty-two cities, and last, on occasion, garners higher ratings from New York City viewers than the thirty minutes of *Saturday Night Live* with which the show competes. Estimates of his salary are usually in the 5 million range. For all the controversy he does, he only rarely talks in reports, and only then to show his listeners will be sympathetic. “All journalists are lying bastards,” he has said. He said it to me, and, does he blow off my report for an interview. The chase started there.

SHE HAS FATHERS AGAINST EVERYWHERE, doesn’t drink, smokes, takes drugs, fed around on a diet of dietetic yeast, not red meat, or stay up much past four a.m. There are his two daughters. Spends the hour-long hour drive into Manhattan every morning practicing transcendental meditation.

“I hear he’s a Buddhist monk at home,” says frequent radio show guest Judy Tzuka.

“You heard his wife wears the pants in the family,” often mutters the Coopers.

“Howard is almost like Syd,” says dot-dash Richard Stern. “The Howard Stern you hear on the radio is not what he’s really like. He’s a very sensitive, brilliant, compassionate man, but very idealistic. Everything he does is planned out.”

“Howard’s basically a nice Jewish boy from Long Island,” says former boss Kevin McCarthy. “He’s very clever about what he has in on one of his air. He’s always readjusted one of his radio’s off-air who, at the end of the day, takes off his leather pants, his whips, and his chains, puts down a nice breakfast, gets in his Mercedes, and goes home to his beautiful suburban house on Long Island.”

THE OUTSIDERS WHOSE HOWARD TAKES his syndicated eleven-hour show “Clay, when most days, bodily looking point plans, born of efforts opposite readers in the air, everything naturally in order—until you go to the Howard Stern production office, which is connected with just a blow-up on a wall wearing a big made of two yarmulkes, a plastic nose of a rabbit’s tail. Like the room of a religious teenager. After spilling for the chase the TV station’s public relations lady who invited me to watch the taping next, leaving me to talk with the radio ladies.

“Who are they?” I ask, pointing to a bulletin board covered with celebrity names.

CLUES, AND FINALLY, FACING HIM DOWN ON HIS OWN TURF. GUESS WHO WINS

“People we’re trying to get on the show.”

I look through the doors—Robert Griffith, Tim Chen, Justin

Emerson, Eddie Murphy.

“Have any of them said yes?”

“No,” he sighs.

But then Jackie Marting, Howard’s chief writer and one of the few members of the on-air retinue, wanders into the office and wonders who I am. “A writer?” he repeats, with a puzzled expression. “Come Howard know you’re here?”

Jackie listens. A few minutes later he appears with an apologetic magazine cover to inform me that I have to depart the premises at once.

“It’s sorry,” he says, avoiding my eyes.

“Howard does not want me to talk to you, and he does not want you to talk to us.”

HOWARD STERN’S ROBERT JAH Cohen, a telephone operator in her and for her, once pretty much every day in the last two years when she has not intended in Howard (Well, there was this brief stretch when she had to move from Washington to New York because Howard had wanted her. But even then she remained herself by sleeping with a sleep who, the owner, “looked just like Howard”). At twenty, Cohen was crippled in a car accident and the new walk with a lapidated roll. A fine was written down the left side of her face. She’s been married four times. Over the years she has made many on-air phone calls and occasional visits to the radio, during those times Howard has called her luscious, loud, crazy, daring, chase, dumb girl, double. She plays tapes of her experiences for me, clearly missing the words.

She has had her face tattooed on her ear.

“Do you want to see it?”

No. Go! No.

There is a silver-dollar-size Howard head, long hair, dark glasses, drawn onto the folds of draped white fabric.

“Surprisingly Howard actually told his brother because of the Philadelphia calls. Cohen showed up at his home then. ‘It was the only time I saw his eyes go back on me,’ she remembers. ‘I saw his new haircut he used to have a little more on the outside, and according to a newspaper report, he looks a handsome person.’”

ANDER BROTHERS because of what he sees as their own Howard line. “Howard’s especially, but his, Woot. Andre Cockburn last year in *The Vision*, [The Howard Stern radio show] has made an even freer major contribution to the mental state of public talk on the East Coast. Since countless awards, signed on by an interesting woman called Robin Cippon, who gives psychotropic bursts of laughter to each radio ally.”

Jerry Nadelman, the named editor of the New York Post, has known Howard for several years. He says, “One day Howard called me up at home and asked me what I thought of his show. And I told him, ‘I think you should be more potent and talk less about things,’ so that he implied, ‘Okay, here’s a personal question, how you guess

as the you can no longer be your thing?’ I laugh. ‘Howard guess.

“See? You have him, but you laugh.”

FROM JANUARY 10, 1978 grew up in Kew-Forest, Long Island, son of a teachers father and a prep-school mother who dated on “Woods” and his sister. Lived in a modest split-level of the sort built in the upper for mourning GIs. Formative experience. In the sixth grade, his white neighborhood started burning black, but his parents refused to

him. Left the garage (just dry), hospitalized him on my way made for the Indians on his school—all of whom happened to be black. “I remember for the longest time wanting to be black,” he told *People* magazine. “I heard being white. You want to be with the major my thing when, you must not like a star thank. It was then that I did something weird to my mind.” To see. When the Pioneer Square was made public, he said he would do it. He would come back so he could be there. “Mama Howard,” and here his very own thing. “I was then the where light out of Kew-Forest that did something weird to the black people who moved in. It’s the knowledge of it. It’s then, the one group that was called ‘Who put the you in jewelry?’”

HOWARD’S HISTORY: Robert, who is black, usually has him get away with his vocal taste, but not always.

“This is from the segment of the show when Robin made the news. Robin. The son of an Atlanta rapper Andrew Young.”

Howard, Andrew Young? E. Yash, he served in the US and married with Anne Louise King Jr. E. Rubin, I know my black history. E. Okay. Well, he was once he was caught up by D.C. cops, who beat him and broke his leg. Photos say they were responding in reports of loud noise in Howard University at 1:30 in the morning.

It. Hey, don’t give me a night more, imagine getting a call from Howard University.

It. Why is that a nightmare? It. I would just say, “Uh, the very I, I need some back up, uh, three hundred cops, please.”

It. [unintentionally nervous] Why is that a nightmare?

It. I don’t know. I don’t want to say.

It. Go ahead, tell me what you’re thinking. We’ve got to get this out in the open.

It. It just would be very dangerous over there.

It. Would you say the same thing about the University of Maryland?



The future of TV is still with politicians, the ghost of Cohen, and going down for the holidays.

Barbara
Kruger

the entire Sternian enterprise, a perpetually recurring bee in Howard’s bonnet (and that bonnet is definitely a bonnet). Even his jerky adolescent fantasies about women, to his constant goofing on gays and lesbians, to his deeply disturbing *Fear of a Black Planet*, Stern, at times, embodies the kind of dangerously uncontrolled populism that is so prevalent in America today. Caught between passion and disenchantment, he spouts the false banalities of “common sense” and reaffirms the meaning of stereotypes. He’s like an antenna for bad ideas: recovering all the dumb assumptions he’s fed (what else could explain his glibbie pro-Blair/Bush voting record, which he now regrets) and rebroadcasting them to an audience of avid daisies.

But Stern is no Morton Downey Jr., Joe Pyne, Rush Limbaugh, or Andrew Dice Clay. Stern is funny. Really funny. And that’s where things get complicated. Because Stern can cut at least two ways. What makes us laugh are not just the ironic misreadings of an extant life but also the fascinating arrogance of stupidity. Stern’s gift (or curse) is his ability to deliver an abundance of both. [continued on page 98]

[continued from page 94] And it is this coupling of reasoned goofing with over-the-top fear and loathing that makes some listeners squirm even while it expands his cult beyond dude-don. For while objectifying women as the central receptacle of his dramas, his identity male jinxbox, Stern returns volitionally pro-choice and has been issuing the most powerful indictments of the Reagan/Bush anti-abortion agenda ever heard in the media. Worked up to a fever pitch, he screeches that any woman who wants for Bush might as well put her vagina in an envelope and mail it to the White House, since she is literally giving the Bush administration control over her body (Right on, Howard!) And his run-ins with the FCC have transformed him into a muckraker for First Amendment rights, casting him to nags about the stacking of the Supreme Court with pathetic right-wing mediocrities.

Stern's relationship to guys and lesbians is equally ambivalent, ranging from nice curiosity to genuine curiosity from "The Out of the Closet" Stern Show (celebrity interviews) to "Lebanon Dial-a-Date" (a proven status booster). Stern joins the conventions of gay-baiting with a schadenfreude familiarity and affection. But it is in the area of race where he loses it, abandoning ambivalence and crashing head-on into the rocky shores of contempt. Combining a punch of Nineties-style America First xenophobia with a dollop of old-fashioned race-baiting, he brings out the worst in his listeners as Robin ponderfully cringes through it all. Stern chooses to remain studiously ignorant of the power of some of his stereotypical declarations, of his "monks" that are swallowed whole by the bulk of his audience, which is even less into irony and subtlety than he is.

But, of course, Stern isn't about subtlety. He's about a kind of narcissistic pathos, a spectacular self-disgust that pulls him through the swamp of his own yuckiest abjection. (Illustration: Howard, you hate yourself as if we love you for it.) He's about being really funny, he's about telling it like it is when it really isn't, about getting intensely worked up without thinking too hard, about cutting through the grease, about being by his wits, about being very smart but not too intelligent, about being savvy around small, telling moments but missing the big picture, or maybe it's the other way around. He's both a third-rate actor and a full-on masochist. He's the Antioch, the walking wounded, laughing all the way to the bank. He's the voice-over call that America deserves.

HOWARD BELIEVES HE WAS FIRED BY NBC

H. No.
E. Oh, Howard, you're so—
H. Come on, you know you get nervous being a white guy.
You're nervous about doing the wrong thing.
E. [laughing]—Then don't do the wrong thing!

BARBARA VANTRENE, now chairman of Paramount Pictures, then chief of programming for NBC, called Howard "the future of TV."

F. I HATE IT, I WANT TO GET TO REM IN BED! I AM A TV SHOW! I mean that guy, "Do you have an unusual talent or an unusual comment?" Is a part of the audience for the annual Howard Stern Halloween show that Friday at 11:00 PM?

Desiring like a member of the cast to not be on original idea. In the parking lot of the studio there are at least three Howard look-alikes and one "Ray Gary" (the handsome nickname Howard has given his thirty-year-old producer) among two hundred or so cultural activists vying for one of the ten available spots in the studio. But as he's about to leave, I see one person representing Robin. The only other women allowed into the studio are two light-haired strippers who have been provided with newspapers among others.

"Do you think we get to keep them?" one asks the other in the corridor as they spring between two newly seated women in a room full of doctored men.

"I don't think so," she answers. "Mine has a removable plastic strip on the crotch."

This show isn't his first attempt at TV. In 1975, the Fox Network commissioned a pilot hoping that Howard might replace the aging Jack Rivers show. But the producers just had a hunch, and when West Coast writers in email his tape, and promptly turned him into the thing he despises. The pilot was never picked up.

During the three-hour taping, Howard sat moodily on the set, occasionally belittling to his producers. "What's going on long?"

Know how he feels—halfway through the taping I get so bored I try to sit up some trouble by telling Robin Givens who I am. During a break she and Howard return to their dressing rooms but neither to turn off their instant microphones, so I can make out bits and pieces of their conversation from a set of one-way mirrors.

When Howard hears I am in the studio he wants me to come out, but Robin comes to my defense, saying, "Well, now she did get on here legitimately."

To the end, they decide to ignore me.

ATWENTY-FOUR, DOING SAT RADIO (soon confined, just enough to get him into Boston University) in college, worked on the radio station and majored in communications, also met his future wife, Alison, a pretty blonde from Newton, Massachusetts. Otherwise, almost no one had heard of him except his parents. So, early was viewed in the studio by Karen, whose he met as a teenager at summer camp.

Howard: None of the girls wanted me. Karen wouldn't have looked at me, right? You never noticed me as a guy, did you?

Karen: No, you were my friend.

H. That's good, man, she's why I make women suffer every day on this show. Because that's why I hate them. Because I don't like I do. Don't call up and tell me not to fantasize women on this show. This is what I wanted for my whole life. All of you work your ass, like it's golden. Any of your old friends were famous then not

AFTER AN EXECUTIVE TUNED IN FOR A SEGMENT OF BESTIALITY DIAL-A-DATE.

E. No.
H. Do you have any friends that are bisexual?
E. No.
H. [He] Because I know one day I would be that. I know a since I was five years old, but never everyone else. All you guys with your backdoor. By the way, I love that you came down, Karen. I really appreciate it.
E. [nervously] Oh, really.

STAYING RADIO FOR A TRY, three thousand was the rock station near New York City. Adam he was a terrible disc jockey, or so listeners shared by Mike Gailis, who worked with him back then (now, too). "It was clear he didn't know or care anything about music," she recalls. "To be a really good disc jockey you have to be in the music he was on the air, but with Howard, he always wanted to be the one." Went to work in Washington, D.C., earning high ratings at a station where management had no concept of his brand of radio. Three weeks before his contract was out, he was surprised. He was then hired by NBC in New York, earning high ratings at a station where management had no concept of his brand of radio. Every media group in town had a theory on why he was fired. Howard told Radio-How he believed it was the time Thomson Industries, then chairman of RCA, NBC's parent corporation, turned in and heard a bizarre message at midnight called "Sensory Dial-a-Date." Jerry Newman wonders if it was the NBC TV correspondent Gerald Uley's sign-off after a program on shock radio, something like, "It is my sad duty to report that this very network employs Howard Stern."

Soon he was hired by New York's WOL, part of the infidelity Radio-How network. A beautiful media business, in a strange way, both Howard and his new company were created by Ronald Reagan's demagogues (see Under Reagan, a former Florida disc jockey named Mike Fowler was made head of the FCC. Fowler, who once called infidelity "a monster with pictures," claimed that the marketplace would destroy the rules of decency in broadcasting. Charged stations began to organize against the shock jocks. That year the FCC issued a warning to the Philadelphia station that carried the Stern show and, one year later, fined several stations for indecency, among them infidelity. Most of the microphone in paid up. Only infidelity spent thousands of dollars to fight the charges.

F. I HATE TO GET TO SPEAK WITH HOWARD STERN, but I see it in his public mentions, it was on his terms. That's why I saw the conversation took place on the radio. Mostly the conversation consisted of my trying to show him into allowing his female and family to talk to me for this article. And he mostly deflected my concerns, which was not always very considerate. But, you try doing

an interview with three million people listening. But toward the end of the conversation I did some one point, I think, and Howard's response was disarming.

Some of the funniest bits on the show are the interview segments conducted by a young man with a profound stutter. Stuttering John asks embarrassing and/or inappropriate questions of celebrities who almost always flee or call for security guards. [To himself: legend Carl Tuziowski he asked, "When do you think rock more balls in the chair, Yogi Berra or Rock Hudson?"]

"Howard?" I said, "You're always complaining about the men who are afraid of you and won't come on your show, so you send Stuttering John screaming into the studio, but don't you find it ironic that you're doing the same thing to me?"

And then Howard did what he does when the correct begins to slip over to slightly from his fingers. He keeps up.

Barbara
Kruger

POWER COCK- FIGHTING WITH PAC-MAN AND THE WEEPING WIDOW

The coming Philippine election would be a surreal comedy if it weren't the death rattle for democracy in what was once the last hope corner of the Third World

BY TAD FRIEND

I MELA MARCOS CLUCK CLACKS BOTOS the pink marble floor as scowling speed, bursting through the heavy door to find the almost dark, down right, Japanese corners. Greeting speed, inside blown by the fiery other people personally becalmed in her 42,000 Imperial State at the Plaza, a group that today includes a legendary woman who's been passing history to help make her governor of Malacañan; these security guards posed to intercept the woman, an overheard letter history who was also patroned to the Philippines by a former General Perón, and a very old Filipino Ilocos Bandana who traveled his days in Manila to Japan. "He is" as everyone cleverly calls her, with a line clacker that is now, quite plenty, dead. Before they can all move this way, Marcos steps just, into the piano room, then onto the balcony.

"Oh," she cries, lowering her white handkerchief, translucent. A quarter mile away the Cultural Center of the Philippines is an 18c, its roof holding with flowers and aerial black smoke. Marcos' red nails click the railing and her roared chords begin to shake even

her tremendous hair, crowding on her head like a live panther, some returned "This is it," she mutters. "If they have what's beautiful to us, that's really the end."

The Cultural Center was always Imelda's baby, a powerfully ambiguous symbol of the Marcos years. Built in 1976 for \$15 million, 80 percent of which was donated away in Lockheed, the Center was the first symptom of Imelda's legendary "indulge complex," her compulsion to build palaces, five-star hotels, and other big concrete things. She was barely attacked by her old boyfriend Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino who decried "a monument to the nation's class breach of social conscience," both to redress the name Imelda—when the unprecedented mass protest in 1983.

Now, nearly three years later, Aquino is now years dead, paraded down, possibly a Imelda's before, by army thugs at the Manila airport. His diaries and appalling murder in the living face of rock the heady dynamism Imelda and her husband Ferdinand from Malacañan Palace in 1981 and exiled Ninoy's widow, Corason

Imelda Marcos, trying to fill the shoes of the first Ferdinand, announces her candidacy for president.



"IMELDA'S LIES GIVE THE PEOPLE SOME HOPE. ALL THE POOR, STUPID FILIPINOS ARE THEIR OWN WORST ENEMY."

And Ferdinand is dead, too, of leprosy. Imelda, after five years in exile, has come home at age sixty-two to their eighty-seven civil and criminal cases that charge her with looting the treasury of up to \$6 billion. Dead to my mind and decorum, she has also come home to run for president.

Believe or not across the way Philippine columnist for the Cultural Center's National Theater Festival sure at the blast, which was started by a story about its homemade rocket, landed during the opening ceremonies. Among the dozens of exiles from across the archipelago's seven thousand islands, former kings and queens from Panatag, an epic chapter from Pinoy headlines-warring first-nations from Ilo-Ilo. Most are holding hands, and many are weeping and crying out in a confusion of the country's many languages. In the last few years the Philippines has been haunted by a devastating earthquake, a cyclone, the explosion of Mount Pinatubo, and the registered importance of U.S. military bases that had brought the country in billions a year, more than any of its exports. Many Filipinos dream a plan for drastic punishment, and the donors have already identified this fire as the new player.

Up on the balcony, Imelda whispers, "Oh... oh!" as the flames roar higher in the evening sky. Gathering behind her ones, "The very spirit of the Filipino people is being constrained in smoke!"

LITTLE, FRENCH-BORED like the flames that night, and the Countess remains only about six inches in diameter. It seems that the next player will attack her, in response, the May is presidential election. It is a watershed moment. "The first time in twenty-seven years we can bring about a transfer of power through the ballot," says Vice President Salvador "Doy" Laurel, one of the eight presidential candidates. "But if the nation finds the Philippines' life is over."

"I don't think history will give us another chance," agrees one distant Ramos "Marching" Man.

But the campaign itself has flipped the head in history. Surely concerned to voters and issues, the campaign resembles a broadway musical dramatizing a squabble about who gets to drive the family car-frustrating. But you feel it a lot more and demand the friends' results, poor men who resemble Americans with "Feelings," and candidates attempting to outmaneuver all others. The Philippines is its person. Catholic, and the candidates include a man in his late sixties, a man still conspiring, to appear behind-the-scenes, who belongs to the only political independence but religious redemption.

These fantasies of pure salvation imply a country bewildered by its colonial legacy under Spain and then America, a history some nations recognize as "the centuries in a corner and fifty years in Hollywood." Only this year, when the Aquino government ended the United States base on the Clark and Subic Bay military bases, declaring, "We must stop the dollar empire," did the crippling per-

centage finally come to an end. Americans, freed as well, could suddenly see that their former colony's economic problems looked strangely familiar—our own policies intensively reflected in a few-hour mirror.

Imelda Marcos's campaign is particularly odd, because she was a Filipino political revolution to their shared enemies. Eyewitness by many is eventually aware her support behind her husband's private crisis, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., Imelda is easy to dismiss as a political Novice Deaconess ("I'm sorry for my close-up, Mr. Dabillie"). The idea for resolving the Philippines' problems with population growth, poverty, land reform, and runaway graft are certainly rudimentary. "His campaign platform," Marcos's press secretary, Del Vano, explains, "is to reduce the deficit... make government more efficient by a reduced but better paid... self-help... self-employment." "The people are getting longer '1988, it's a dream game."

Imelda, better than anyone, understands how to conduct on the Philippine system for the gods. Though Aquino isn't running again, Marcos obviously owns the race as a bride between Imelda and Cory, a "War of the Widows." When she campaigned in her husband's home province of Iloilo, Imelda spent considerable photo-op time brooding over the corpse of Marcos's mother, which has been awaiting burial since May 1981 and was recently put in a more formal casket display over postcard Imelda's innocent portrait of Ferdinand's body from his air-conditioned car in Iloilo. There Danding (and Ferdinand) will be buried together—a fitting act of closure, and a rare crowd pleaser.

It's a measure of how maddening the Marcos legacy would be the country's self-image that Imelda can still inspire fierce loyalties by flaunting her wealth to those she privately and properly refers to as "my poor, my hungry." When I inquire about the poor's headlong devotion (their frantic screams leave Marcos a mere bystander), she says, "They know that I am not been disabled by widowhood and depression—as a woman, or a loss, or an act of offense far from their desperation. It's kind of romance."

"The history of Imelda is a woman's wealth," says Francis Lomera, the son of a senatorial candidate on Marcos's ticket. He's referring to the legend that the Marcoses discovered when Generalissimo turned the son on thousands tons of gold and jewelry the Japanese had plundered during World War II (and passed to Imelda's boy hands, then a scholarly opinion in support the Marcoses found the gold). "We believe the gold is a will going to permit to the Filipino people. It's a magic. If the gold is true, and it pays our debt, we wish. If it's not true, we lose—the whole more do we have to fight."

"There's a very good chance Imelda will go," I stand just, the country's most famous worker, says gleefully. "The poor don't care about corruption, they don't care about programs. What helps them are dreams, and Imelda lies to them, she promises them as a goddess, a dream factory—she gives them hope. All the poor, stupid Filipinos. They're in their worst enemy."

The candidates' refusal to form coalitions means that Imelda or anyone else who can pursue a philosophy of about eight million of the supposed thirty-five million votes will probably never win them, thus,

marvelous, fair accusations of cheating, violent protests and the strong likelihood of a military coup to secure stability. "Among to Filipinos we don't accept defeat, we don't surrender," concludes Joseph Estrada says cheerfully. "We join together to complain about the system."

"The legend and personal power would be the foundation of the Marcos family candidates against the anti-Marcos candidates," says Miriam Defensor-Santiago, another candidate. She has enjoyed big leads in three successive nationwide polls on the strength of her golf-busting, her youth (she's forty-six), and her charismatic reputation for throwing chairs at employers and calling a congressman "Tungas" (he's "It's a waste of time"). Defensor-Santiago continues, "Because the candidates are poorer than we. We're all going to carry out the Graft principle. Those who are the gods would destroy, they fear for the presidency of the Philippines."

IMELDA'S INFERRAL BETS, Franco Rosellini, co-president of the nightclub scene like Cagaya, dreamily nods on his suit against holder Aging, old, and almost appears in a collage when he's in his pocket, when some peace, and exudes, he is his nineteenth floor in from Tokyo to surprise Imelda. Though her known as Roberto's brother and Imelda's words, Franco achieved a certain notoriety of his own as the prince in Imelda's "my play" cabaret, which included Van Cliburn, Dore Dake, Gino Ford, and George Hamilton.

It's hard now to recall that Ferdinand and Imelda took office in 1965 on an anticorruption platform, styled themselves after John and Jackie Kennedy, and inspired idealistic protest for a country that was already economically ahead of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. What makes it necessary to the tale of self-indulgence that left the country financially and spiritually bankrupt. Ferdinand making President Marcos' present that Marcos's son "Young Bong" would be the first Filipino on the moon, Imelda designing "Love Lines" (which will appear Manila carrying their Foreigner Family band design), Imelda spending six million on jewelry in Geneva in a single day while two thirds of the Philippines's sixty-two million people slipped below the poverty line, unable to meet the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter.

The parish means help explain why the world was so taken by the morality play of the bloodless 1986 EDSA revolution, when some tried to block President Marcos' assumed personal career from assisting the rebels suppressing Corason Aquino. "The lower-class from whom Marcos had stolen the election indicated such moral righteousness the second chance by God to cleanse the nation."

But years later EDSA is seen not as a revolution but merely as a change of government, and a small change at that. Aquino's achievements simply put, as two she held onto power despite severe coup attempts, and the relinquished power voluntarily after one term, which no previous president has done. But this exercise of constitutional virtue is almost denied by her other achievements—of making the Marcoses look amazingly good.

"The economy had zero growth and 13 percent inflation last year, and Aquino's bulldozer had reform progress—a cry of protest for government in a country where less than a percent of the firms control more than 70 percent of the land, percent yearly inflation. Aquino's international assistance that military and paramilitary forces trying to suppress economies and Muslim rebels have increased and killed more than 500 civilians for political reasons most anti-peace (the son of "battering" involving "my play" [defensor of justice] and "substance" [land subjugated in a policy] that made Marcos an inflexible. And though Aquino's own policy was captured, she weakly permitted her brother José "Turing" Cojuangco, her wife, "Turing," and her brother-in-law Ricardo "Boby" Lopez, to become more more heavily involved in graft, gambling, monopolies, and other better trade."

The administration also left the Philippines' economic disaster largely unaddressed. For capita income is only \$200 a year; lower than one third of the Asian poor have purchasing or garbage collection, and in Manila, which has two thirds of the country's cars and trucks, everyone holds hand-to-hand and made to their loss in a graft attempt to lift the new levels of social mobility. Population is growing unbridled at 2.8 percent annually, by the year 2000 the country will somewhere have to find as much as 200 million new food and sixteen million more jobs. The Island Health Association of the Philippines recently reported that 50 percent of Filipinos already suffer from mental instability stemming from malnutrition, tension, and economic hardship.

All the candidates save Fido "Boby" Ramos, Aquino's former secretary of defense and her endorsed favorite, are running against her presidency, and even—those who they voted for Cory—should even in her government. "You just have to keep waiting the war," a cabinet secretary says wearily. "I always go back to EDSA, when Marcos found the Helms from foreign. And as they left, they began quarreling, backing, blaming Marcos for the deprivation of the island. They made the Philippines of Egypt. Many people feel we cannot afford to live so cheaply. If freedom is worth it, it's worth it, in blood, you value it more."

"My dad," Franco Rosellini says into the late-afternoon silence as the Imperial Hotel, "everyone here it always going to be corrupt." He fishes in his pocket and pulls out a special issue of "One Thousand Miles of History in the Twentieth Century" From the Los Angeles Times. "This is very favorable about Marcos," he says proudly, passing it around.

A historic note reads it and Aquino. "It says he was dishonest and the country was going to destroy."

"Such, but he's not being considered for the bloody murder, he's being remembered for fighting on to the end."

"It's not good," the aide says shortly.

Rosellini takes the magazine back and reads aloud. "[Aquino] was defeated by a massive electoral fraud... Well, perhaps not. He puts a look in his leg and looks over confidently. Imelda is extremely feminine. She has that secret pillow talk, you understand—the last scene to the husband."

While we ponder that, Rosellini continues quizzing about Ferdinand on the present tense. "While I was doing Cagaya, he told me

sings and made some notes, he said, "That's not right—he knew that history like had lived a."

The birth stories who provides inside with groups and hand run away from her shoulders, followed closely by the hairdresser who loquaces her nose. This is as good as a champagne bubble, and soon enough inside herself emerges, regardless in a green dress with brass buttons and one of her ornate silk scarves (a hairdresser told her scarves would protect her from assassination). "Ah, Franco!" she says, and take over. He runs with difficulty to kiss her hand. When inside emerges on, Rosalinda tearfully makes his way out.

She stands with fifteen of the twenty-four candidates on her seasonal tour to be photographed beneath an oil portrait of a young, black Ferdinand Marcos, and then she closes her eyes. When asked how many of the seven presidents on her date featured in the coup attempts against Aquino, Marcos looks complacent. There are scars from the unattractive hospital, hospital jingles.

"None?" she asks them. They look away. "None," she says firmly. In fact, at least two of the seven were coup ringmasters, and another senatorial candidate, Arsenio Delaño, declared himself the country's acting leader in the first coup, which captured only the Manila Hotel. The rebels were made to do twenty push-ups and sent back to their barracks.

Even when the new lying inside look at emotional reality but still wearing, she has decided to let things go, and she knows how Chinese businessmen are poised to make much to support. But she's even more uneasy about the trade with Marcos, how the Delaño Commission unmasked her husband, and how come force fields present the Philippines from foreign markets.

Her wretched support lawyer Pedro Peralta to file a petition with the Executive Commission (COMELC) to have Marcos disqualified as "an obvious political party" and "an honorable and available successor," inside himself with scars slowly rolling down her cheeks. The prison was dismissed.

There is a uniquely Filipino response to such progress, a morose laugh deeply at someone with their prevailing wealth and power, it is almost a yelp. "It's not private answers," says inside Delaño-Santiago. "It's a way of saying, 'We're suffering, we need help, we're at our wit's end as a people.'"

IT BECAME TO A QUESTION in a candidate's forum at the Manila Hotel, former defense secretary Fidel Ramos shifts on under, then refused again around to his mouth and promises to ignore the Philippines' huge economic war, the Philippine Islands, who spend the afternoon sitting on the sidewalk managing their economy. "Gales of laughter fill the third-floor room, a politeness that grows as people look at the chairman face of Ramos's rival, Mirroring Mirra. Mirra, the former speaker of the house, hands out lightening rounds. This job further confirms the battle they've waged since Mirra won the nomination of the ruling Liberal party and Ramos refused out, forced his own party, and joined Aquino's endorsement. She was known to feel along to look at the debt of gratitude to Ramos for saving her from the coup-coup.

Though he drew the most autograph seekers after the Manila Hotel debate, and though he has the support of forty of the country's seventy-two governors, Ramos's own campaign seems more on proving that his government was there upon him. "At Ramos's kickoff rally," Mirra says glacially, "they said 'Ramon number one, mind up!' and nobody knows 'Ramon number two' and nobody needs. If he can't run a decent national convention on TV, how can the fellow run a government?"

Mirra is kind of seeing that Ramos, as a Marcos general, is some of goods. "I never offered him the vice-presidential slot, so he has been ignored," Mirra says. "If I became president I'd like to be able to sleep right. As the great Filipino person said, 'The glory of seeing a nation does not belong to one who participated in its ruin.'"

By that standard few could run for president, and Mirra might not be among them. "The president, along with many Filipinos, despises Mirra," says Mirra Defense Santiago, who, at one of Mirra's meals, is admittedly biased. "He made his fortune as a gopher for Danding Cojuangco, Marcos's biggest enemy. Mirra is the classic Filipino traditional politician—that is, a crook." (It's worth noting that the Tagalog word for traditional politician, *crab*, also means *worthless*.)

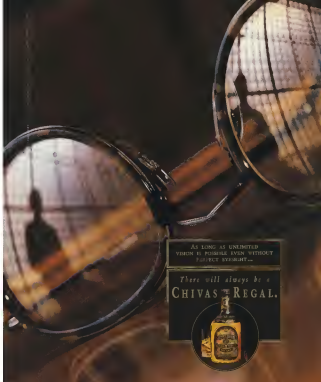
Like Mirra, Danding Cojuangco became the richest man in the Philippines. He was known as *Pai-Mirra*, because he used his control of the very million copra levy to swallow up more than one hundred companies, including a commercial bank, copra trading companies, and the San Miguel corporation, which accounts for 5 percent of the Philippine economy. He also maintained almost two thousand men armed with the world's largest private collection of U.S. submachine guns, and was widely believed to have wiped out scores of his enemies in his home province of Tarlac. "Cojuangco is a mafia boss," a cabinet secretary says. Early Cojuangco fled with Mirra in 1986, but stuck back home in 1991 and is now steering the country promising to double income in rural towns, hotels, and, soon, to restore Mirra's monopoly economies.

"The Cojuangco clan [Danding's cousins Gray Aquino and her brother Peping] cannot allow Danding Cojuangco to become president," Defense-Santiago says, "because they know he will take vengeance for their self-interest against him [many of Danding's assets have been sequestered, and pending cases seek the forfeiture of assets without any explanation]. The president believes Danding was involved in the death of her husband, so the name he appointed. They'll throw everything they have against him; they won't even let him happen in the country. There will be carnage, and the Philippines will be a battleground."

PHILIPINO BREAD IS A CRUMB of bread-giving, featuring movie stars who are paid millions to lend glitz, and crowds swollen by those willing to endure five-hour waitlines for the biscuits. "These people are going to be brought for a few hours," says one campaign manager. "What? Because they're poor?"


There is a ritual rib and flow as these masses. Money pours into the economy during elections—the richest candidates are spending up to \$200 million, and Cojuangco is widely said to have offered Joseph Estrada at million just to join him as his running mate—and then the masses suck it back out in graft. "It goes to 10 million pesos [between 100,000 to 1 million] to even run for Senate, it's expensive," says Susan Latorra, who, after it to Mirra's senatorial slot. "But if you are [there is a Filipino saying that if you are before [your job], it will be hard not to get all on your hands. What is politeness, if not to get rich?"]

Though COMELC has sought to minimize mischief by banning guns, liquor sales, and cockfighting on election day, trying to stop the influence of "guns, goats, and gold" in Philippine elections is like trying to seal the sea with dental floss. Supporters are paid two dollars to walk the route at night and are banned from direct to churches so they can vote early and often. (Continued on page 122)



AS LONG AS UNLIMITED
VIBRANCE IS POSSIBLE, EVEN WITHOUT
PERFECT WEATHER...

There will always be a
CHIVAS REGAL.



FOUR FILM COUPLES SHOW HOW THE

RIGHT MIX MAKES THE RIGHT MATCH

Double-breasted overcoats not worn short, knicker capers short and rolled cotton socks by George Armand. Air Nines by Brown. Skirt by Eddies. Earrings by Robert Lee Moore. Ring by Tim Stone. Shave by Maurice Wilkins.

Timothy DALY
&
Penelope Ann
MILLER

107



IN SOME OFFERS, THE GREAT JACKET IS ALREADY AN ACCEPTABLE AS A GUY AND OTHER MORE HERMELIN.

Double-breasted wool sport jacket, ribbed cotton vest, and wool trousers by Calvin Klein Collection. Cotton polo shirt by Calvin Klein. Leather boots by Susan Warner Edwards. Hair cut by Giorgio Armani. Makeup by Elizabeth Arden. Opposite page: Single-breasted wool sport jacket and wool trousers by Valentino. Dress, shoes by Valentino. Hair done by Alberto Ferretti.

Matthew
MODINE
&
Jennifer
GREY

WE'VE ALREADY HAD PLENTY OF SEVERAL FILMS, FOOTBALL FILMS—AND GOD KNOWS, PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING FILMS—ED WHO NOT A SAILING FILM! JUST AFTER OF THE AMERICA'S CUP DEFENSE IN SAN DIEGO COMES *Wind*, WITH MATTHEW MODINE AND JENNIFER GREY. MODINE, A GREY IS COMEDIC (*Married to the Mob*) AND DRAMATIC (*Body, Man, the Bill*) ACTOR, STARS AS A TWELVE-METER SCIPPER OUT TO WIN BACK THE CUP WITHOUT LOSING HIS GIRLFRIEND AND CREW MEMBER PLAYED BY GREY, WHO IS STILL SO MEMORABLE FROM *Pretty Baby*, *Day Off*, AND *They* *Coming*.

STOLTZ IS VETERAN FOR
FOUR DECADES. HIS BLAZER
TOGETHER JACKIE IS NOW
WELL KNOWN FROM
THE L.P. BY HANDEE KERRY
DESIGNER'S COLLECTION.

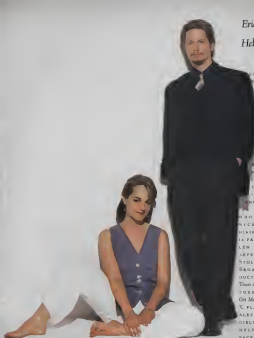
Leather jacket by RM
Korea. Cotton shirt by
California. Wool and
Sash. Wind sweater
for dress by Tilly
Leather jacket by
Dress by Tilly
Sash by Tilly

Opposite page: Dress
Leather jacket, cotton shirt
Leather dress and silk
Leather dress, Her dress
Leather dress, Her dress
Leather dress, Her dress



Eric Stoltz & Helen Hunt

C RITICS AND AUDIENCES
WEEK FIRST
WAS BY ERIC
STOLTZ WHEN
HE PLAYED
THE FACIAL
IT DISFIG-
URED TEEN-
AGE ROCKY
DENNIS IN
Milk. Now in
The Warden
HE TAKES ON
WHAT IS QUITE
DIFFICULT AN
EVEN MORE PHY-
SICALLY CHAL-
LENGING ROLE.
A NOVELIST
WHO BEARS HIS
WICK WHILE ON A
HOLING TRIP AND
IS PARALYZED HE-
LEN HUNT, WHO
APPEARED WITH
STOLTZ IN A
BROADWAY PRO-
DUCTION OF *Our
Town* AND WAS FEAT-
URED IN *Pretty Boy*
Got Married AND *Peppé*
HE PLAYS STOLTZ'S
ALREADY MARRIED
DILFRIEND, WHO
HELPS HIM GET
BACK ON HIS FEET.
IF ONLY FIGURA-
TIVELY



JUST YOUR AVERAGE AMERICAN FAMILY

A true chronicle of the Gordons, who wanted to be ordinary but became extraordinary when they brought the Sixties home with them

By DONALD KATZ

STAFF REPORTER Samuel Goldenberg walked down the pages of his *Liberty* slip in the first week of November 1949, during a pre-Christmas bonanza. By 1949, the first time that an American soldier was returning from Europe every five seconds of the day. Sam was wearing twelve hundred dollars in crisp winnings on his four pockets, more than he'd made through an entire childhood of hard work and the beginning of his apprenticeship as an electrician. Home alone and flush with a stake, he kept thinking, putting the playboy star money clip in his pocket, turned to a girl I haven't seen since 1945... father of a child I've never seen at all.

During the happiest, romantic year 1950, Sam had fallen hard on love with Eve Rosenberg. They married quickly, and Eve was five months pregnant when they were overseas in July of 1949. He carried her home from battle-field as his bride.

Eve's friends in the Bronx were stunned at her decision to give up a beautiful baby crying over to marry a plain guy like Sam. "I'm all most twenty-two," Eve told her friends. "I've had my fun."

More than anything else, Sam and Eve wanted to have a normal family. They weren't after greatness or fame or even more wealth than was required to create a family unit. That was what millions of others would narrow the war and the family degradation of the Depression wanted, too—a normal American family, a close-knit by which to filter the early and lasting light of life. Now Sam was back home in the warmth of the family, back to make the best American family of all time.

A few hours after coming home he watched his pretty little

girl toddle into the room. He smiled down at Susan, even as her brown eyes looked up at defiance. Then, like a thousand other mothers fathers perhaps looking down at a donated other daughter that day, Sam let Susan stare him against the ropes in a voice clear and rare, she said, "Go away."

I FIRST HEARD A VERSION of the preceding family story while jogging. Between 1971 and 1981, I ran through Manhattan's Riverside Park several times each week beside a talented young composer named Ricky Ian Gordon. Ricky and I talked occasionally during these long runs, about his latest musical scores and about my writing—sad, as friends do, we talked about our families.

Ricky described his father Sam, an electrician who owned only a "normal" family, and his mother, Eve, who rediscovered in a home for Sam and the children. She worked very hard. Ricky's parents decided to change the family name, and in 1952 the Gordons family ascended to triumph from the ethnic Bronx to a brand-new house in a new Long Island suburb, a place that looked to Sam and Eve for all the world like the promised land. The family moved into a splendid house in an *Levittown* section, in the suburban democracy that was the routine called *Harbor Lane* in the new suburbs, where Sam and Eve went "for the good of the family," a boy named Sam through the clean doors—his for my first jogging a

This article was adapted from *Home Front: An Intimate Portrait of One Middle-Class Family in Postwar America*, by Donald Katz, to be published in June by HarperCollins. *Seven Sister Books*.

The New York Times



February 2, 1950: After the light of war back at home and abroad, a shot taken around the world.



Ricky with Mrs. 1972: 1972 (above) (the world) (above)
Sam and Eve, 1943: 1943 (above) (the world) (above)



Susan, 1970: 1970 (above) (the world) (above)



Lorraine, Sheila, and Susan, 1965: 1965 (above) (the world) (above)



Peter Probst and Sheila, 1969: 1969 (above) (the world) (above)



Lorraine with second husband, Harry Hughes, 1972: 1972 (above) (the world) (above)



A day at the beach, 1955: 1955 (above) (the world) (above)

Susan and Michael Lyden, 1969: 1969 (above) (the world) (above)



They Might Be Giants

Or maybe they just look like the new James Dean

By Eve Babitz

It's DANGEROUS to call anyone the new James Dean, because even the old one found being himself somewhere impossible. You don't fly around cars on a motorcycle, drink and whatever else, earn a reputation for being difficult to work with, and acquire your *Death-Proof*-all by the age of twenty-three—if you're not born on departing youth. But it's why we love James Dean—he died before we even knew we were in love with him. Before he could be found wanting, before the studio could crank his style and turn him into an eight-by-ten glossy. The studio actually forbade anyone but his own photographers to shoot him, but fortunately lots of pictures were taken, leaving a legacy of scoundrelly elegance posing in New Yorkish and western ways. We know, both from ads and from the way he moved in his movies, that he was bad. Rock 'n' roll. If he were still alive, James Dean would be cinema's version of Bob Dylan, if not Neil Young.

Martin Scorsese is an Italian James Dean, and early Clint Eastwood was a James Dean in a *Republican* way. Even Woody Allen imaged his James Dean in a screenplay, Jewish New Yorker. Like Dean, Allen's guy got the women and the headbashed shoulder. Daniel Day-Lewis in *My Left Foot* was James Dean, and Sal Viscuso was James Dean as a dead soul. Anything in the consciousness that is beautiful and rebellious and tragic is James Dean—readers know, Jennifer Jason Leigh, beards, Magic Johnson, now Jason Woods is James Dean with a maverick James Dean is what's going on inside, underneath, while old men in suits lie from the podium.

In L.A. there are tons of unemployed teen idols, so actors with even a Hail Mary hope of being compared to James Dean are glad to play along.



James Dean was not a good role model, and you all over America his posters still hang in kids' bedrooms. Nobody could wear jeans like James Dean—until all the Cuban ads on earth will once catch James Dean in jeans. Not with anyone quite close to James Dean on a motorcycle, even though they're not as close to their cars as James and motorcycles. What the '60s proved was that the decade's dream didn't work, because if they did, things wouldn't be the way they are now. But we do still have Bob Dylan and Neil Young, and maybe the spiritual successor has been slowed and melted by the James Dean element—maybe the music America is searching for is best, undoubtedly, in the future. How can you even have turned out to be a dead James Dean was wrong in promoting concepts for hypocrisy, misreading the audience that led his contemporary, Allen Ginsberg, to write, "America, go back yourself with your own hands."

Luke Perry says, "Being compared to James Dean is the scariest thing. He's such a strong image, and it makes him look like the object of a game for me. And it's not what I'm showing for I'll try and be an actor. I don't always want to be the brooding guy in the T-shirt. I want to play jumps and dresses and leopards, cowboy. If I can't play people well, I'll be an actor and not the same James Dean."

Of all the young men being heralded as New James Deans, Luke Perry and Jason Priestley of *Doyle's* Hill get the most teenage-lazy-laziness, mostly because of the chaotic day play on the show—the way they're lit, and their stardom. After seeing what happened with Johnny Depp, the Fox network has figured out that you can't have too many teen idols. These two are total crash material—though the story line is always about do-gooder plots, who can dance when you're in a love tunnel.

Perry says, "For whatever reason, we've all been heralded into the spotlight. It can't go to the market to get anything to eat. Luckily, McDonald's has done through."

On the show, Priestley plays a sophisticated, down-to-earth, unadventurous young guy, Brendon. He's the one you most want to be. The first time in person he seems to be the same kind of man. It's to say that he's not a good actor (like Michael J. Fox, he's about as good as he can be), but when he refers to "person" in public. He brought in an interview in *Doyle's* the magazine for pacy teenage girls, that called him a character, he's not the best he means, but he makes and drinks like any other teenage one-year-old, and that's been living in L.A. for five years—roughly as you can end to anyone's measure. He doesn't drink like the old James Dean.

The youngest among the NJDs is James Chastagner, who is only twenty-two and already a member of the *Doyle's* Studio, not bad for a kid from a small town outside Santa Cruz. He's the only

NJD who sounds grateful for the attention that comes with the James Dean comparisons. "He left a lasting impression on people because he was a lot of things," Chastagner says. "You need to speak now things—at long as when you feel it's on your feet, you're going forward. If you don't find any bumps on the back of your head, you're sleep." It's easy to see why he was cast to play Brendon. Chastagner's brother is Brent Brink—the brother is a lot like Brendon, maybe a little more like a "a movie called *Definitely, Wick* Ed Murphy and Matt Rogers. I play a sophisticated, not, cleverly-witted, slightly more guy—because it's not, it's a stretch to play it now."

Dana Ashbrook is the NJD who is most closely to James Dean. On *Doyle's* he was so dark and brooding in Bobby you couldn't tell that the flesh he looks like that would make English actor, Rupert Everett the beautiful. Ashbrook worked in the photo shoot ahead of a baggy black clothes with a black baseball cap over the first hair in the West, and dark glasses over the eyes, which are so dark, which is that all the makeup women, zippers, and photo center-teen-teen-teen women used to get looks—were left hanging, in casual-out situations. If I weren't old enough to be a model, I'm glad I saw him before I was too old to appreciate it.

The *Doyle's* studio films will include Ashbrook as Bobby again, but as the musician, being one of the new breed of Hollywood kids, the twenty-five-year-old has his own production company and is trying to produce movies so that he will do. "We're trying to make small, serious films," he said, "to further myself as an actor." He just finished a short film called *The Circle Effect*, which, he said, "is about love, rebellion, and bad weather."

Jason Winters, who co-starred with John Wood in *Star 80*, the first of the new breed of Hollywood actors, was virtually aware, such as the *Doyle's* (looking at the art), as the NJD who looks more like the old James Dean than Hollywood show bit of these guys, having moved from Boston to New York to attend NYU film school. "I got a job at the *Doyle's* as a writer and as a bartender. A reviewer came in and said he could get me a job doing commercials, so I went on a Levi's audition and I got it. Then I began getting some jobs and decided to take a break."

He's the only NJD without a publicist and the only one I could actually talk to without feeling harassed on page 131.



OLD JAMES DEAN

THE SPINDICATOR

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER KEEPING YOU UP TO THE SPEEDS ON ALL CULTURAL AND SOCIAL FRONTIERS BY MICHAEL HEISBURN AND GUY MARTIN

HOOTERMANIA! Topless babes are now officially okay. The boom in upmarket gentlemen's clubs nationwide heralds new era in "classy" adult entertainment. Look for Yale Club to now call its monthly literary evenings, "The Distinguished Lecturer Series, featuring **Captain Croam's Tusseling Tootsies**," and New York's ultra-exclusive Le Bernardin to promote Sunday-night table-dancing by Shanelle Stacks with every order of monkfish and savory cabbage. In Chicago, "Family style" strip clubs will be jacking clients in with roller-skating and short-time service as **disco-era** alcohol-free Monty and Kibbles on top. Microcon-run playrooms for children, and special Home To Where You Feel Is Best T-shirt contests on Fudgie. In Miami, Resorts will flock to soon to become vibrant following **rehab kings**, but not constitutional, and as DRG specialist on the premises at all times.



Brooke Shields comes back, please!

Conflict and controversy among the press at last month's **Ensemble** *SpitWard* '94 in Boca Raton. Topic A: If **and/or** when **Brooke Shields** will have a "comeback." Said one media observer: "This is more than just a Hollywood story. It's really a battle over the future of **Television** as we know it." Other topics of discussion: continuing popularity of author **Francis Ford Coppola**, the TV show *Crash*, and **Garth Brooks**.

Following a recent spate of lat-on-lat violence in public-school hallways and hallways, expert boards of education and PTA's across America in response to kind in Detroit, St. Gordon's **Lilly** and **Oliver**.

North have been revised to include an eighth-grade class with a credit score of four-year-old anti-immigrant **hail** **mentors**. And in L.A., marks are have been given the go-ahead by raising police chief **Daryl** **Green** to reflect **Taser** guns and **reunions** to include third grade "quiet time."

Rumors are flying that would-ridden Congressman **Stephen Solarz**, Bill Alexander, and **Mervyn Dymally** will progressively assign from public and-week 2001 waves. Clark Clifford and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney—open a series of **opposite** **check-cashing** **bedbugs**. After a two-month demonstration of "total unavailability," new senators get permission to introduce **Florida** **baggage** bills, too. A **Senate** of the Constitution, a guide to the new tax code, and a controversial but authorized **Continental Airlines** **stock** **certificate**.

Hollywood may soon be unnecessary if the new computer laser **3-D** **Movie** **Studio** **Box** (\$9,999) isn't too big. The **Entertainment** professional couch promises to do at home what mid-life, high-paid movie moguls do every day: they just want to "get it right." It's **Real** **Shoreline** **Blonde** movie with a redeeming social message that also has a lot of **killing**. **Movie** **Studio** **Box** miraculously more from **James** **Dean**, **Orson** **Wells**, and **Tennessee** **Williams** to see a completely new and original "home movie" featuring a rich husband who accidentally picks up an immigration lawyer moonlighting as a pathological bisexual murderer and as the assassin solves the pressing social problems of Los Angeles by **humanely** **knocking** **every** **member** **of** **the** **Cops** **and** **Bloods** **and** then **worship** **the** **more** **any** **back** **to** **the** **age**. The movie ends on an **upbeat** **note**. It

CAMPAIGN REPORT

Quadrifidial advance in **President Bush** have come up with an impressive way to keep the candidates in touch with a **radio** **showcase**. With **1000** **members**, even on phone in to tell the President what his political message should be **that** **day**. High-powered computer tracking enables **Pres** to take a morning's nap on calls and monitor those calls by noon. Originally in a **four-hour** **day** **but** can **extend** a **del** **100** **degrees** **shift** **on** **taxes**, **condemns** **the** **PERA** as **"the** **devil's** **hand** **made**," **remains** **long** **and** **by** **nightfall** **call** **out** **the** **Jews**. "It's a trap," says a **senator** **in** **Bush** **to** **HQ**. "We can now vote on every single one of the **American** **people's** **wishes** **in** **about** **the** **next** **minutes** **they** **have** **them**!"



NRA-approved Lilly

ILLUSTRATION BY LESLIE CHABAKO

YOU CAN'T FIGHT IT
YOU CAN'T HIDE IT
SUMMER IS IN
THE AIR
AND SUDDENLY
EVERYTHING TASTES
IS GOOD IN LIFE
IS THAT MUCH
BETTER.

THE SUMMER GIN
BEEFEATER

MID REMAINS
BEEFEATER

We should've seen it coming. Suddenly, we're getting a reputation we simply weren't expecting. Racy.

After all, the Camry SE was born with the 185 horsepower 24-valve V6 engine that *USA Today* touts as "providing as much power as a conventional V8." Plus, this new arrival to



V6 Engine

the family is gifted with a startling list of talents unique in the Camry ancestry.

Like stiffer sport suspension, a 5-speed manual transmission, a quicker steering ratio, standard sport alloy wheels, black-out window trim, leather-trimmed steering wheel and shift knob, 5-way adjustable sport seat with bolsters, and color-keyed rear spoiler.

And while its performance and handling

are leaving people wonderfully stunned, one thing about the Camry SE is purposefully predictable. It was raised to be just as safety conscious as its siblings, with a standard driver-side air bag* and available ABS. Of course, at Toyota, we love all our Camrys equally, but when it comes to shock value, the SE is the heir to all we have.

NATURALLY, IT'S BEEN A SHOCK TO THE FAMILY.



THE ALL-NEW 1992 CAMRY SE. WE JUST COULDN'T LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE.



Call 1-800-GO-TOYOTA for a brochure and location of your nearest dealer.
*Always use your seatbelt. Driver-side air bag is a supplement to your seatbelt.
Buckle Up! Do it for those who love you. © 1992 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.

"I love what you do for me."

 **TOYOTA**